

PRESENT DAY TRACTS,
CHRISTIAN EVIDENCE,
DOCTRINE, AND MORALS.



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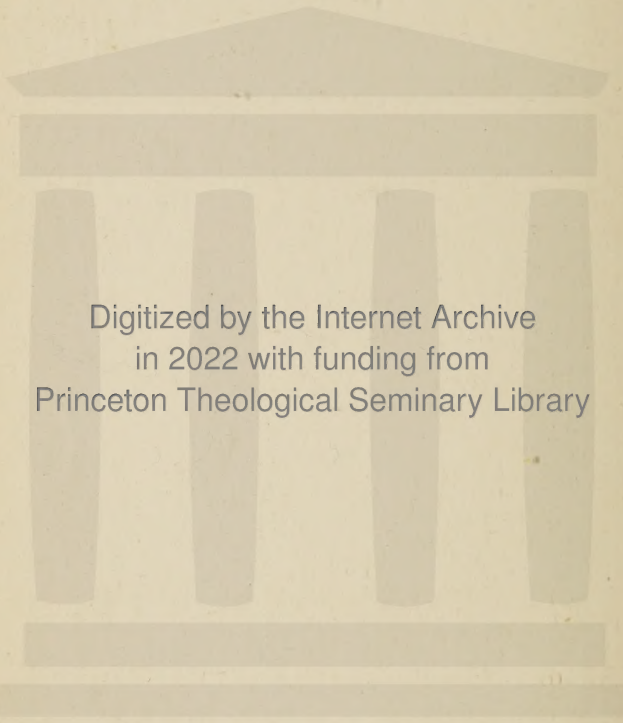
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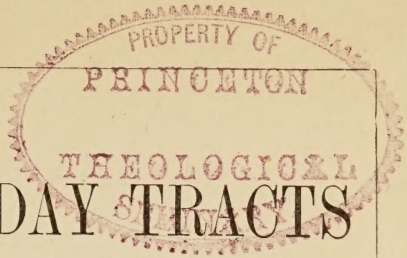
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PRESENT DAY TRACTS

ON SUBJECTS OF

Christian Evidence, Doctrine, and Morals.

BY VARIOUS WRITERS.



VOLUME V.

Comprising Nos. 25 to 30, which may also be had separately.



THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY:

56, PATERNOSTER ROW; 65, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD; AND
164, PICCADILLY.

PREFACE.

FOUR new writers contribute to this, the fifth volume of the Present Day Series, viz., Dr. J. Murray Mitchell, for many years engaged in missionary service in Bombay, who treats very fully and with ample knowledge, the sacred books and religious system of the Parsis, and contrasts this ancient faith with Christianity; Professor Godet, of Neuchâtel, who conclusively proves that the Fourth Gospel was written by St. John, the beloved Apostle; Dr. Conder, who discusses the Origin of the Hebrew Religion, and shows from a survey of its characteristics, as exhibited in the Old Testament records, that it could not be a product of evolution, but must be supernatural and divine in its origin; and Mr. Iverach, who grapples with, and refutes in a most masterly way, the fundamental position of Mr. Herbert Spencer, the acknowledged Apostle of Agnosticism, and shows the utter unreasonableness of this widespread and most mischievous philosophy. An earlier Tract in the Series—Agnosticism: a Doctrine of Despair, by Dr. Noah Porter—showed in a very impressive manner the practical tendencies of the system as destructive of hope for science, for individual and social well-being and progress, and for the future. The one contained in this Volume exposes thoroughly the metaphysical errors and assumptions on which the whole fabric of Agnostic philosophy is reared.

A Tract on the "Present State of the Christian Argument from Prophecy," surveying the whole field;—the

predictions relating to the Messiah, the Jewish people, and the nations of the world, trying them by tests which all must admit to be valid and sufficient, and examining and refuting the current theories of the negative school; and a Tract on the freedom and responsibility of man, entitled, "Man not a Machine, but a Responsible Free Agent," controverting the materialistic fatalism so widely spread among all classes of society, complete the contents of the Volume. These two Tracts are written by the two earliest writers for the Series—Principal Cairns and Prebendary Row—and will not be found inferior in interest and importance to any of their previous contributions to it.

The Series is thus enriched by additions to several of its most important branches—to those of comparative religion, the Divine origin of the religion of the Bible and the Canon of Scripture, and the discussion of the non-theistic systems of the day. Important progress has thus been made in the development of the plan of the Series.

The strongest testimonies to the value and importance of this enterprise continue to be received by the Society; and their earnest hope and prayer are, that it may continue to be in the future, as it has been in the past, the means alike of confirming the faith and removing the doubts of an ever widening circle of readers in these days of much unsettlement and difficulty.

October, 1884.

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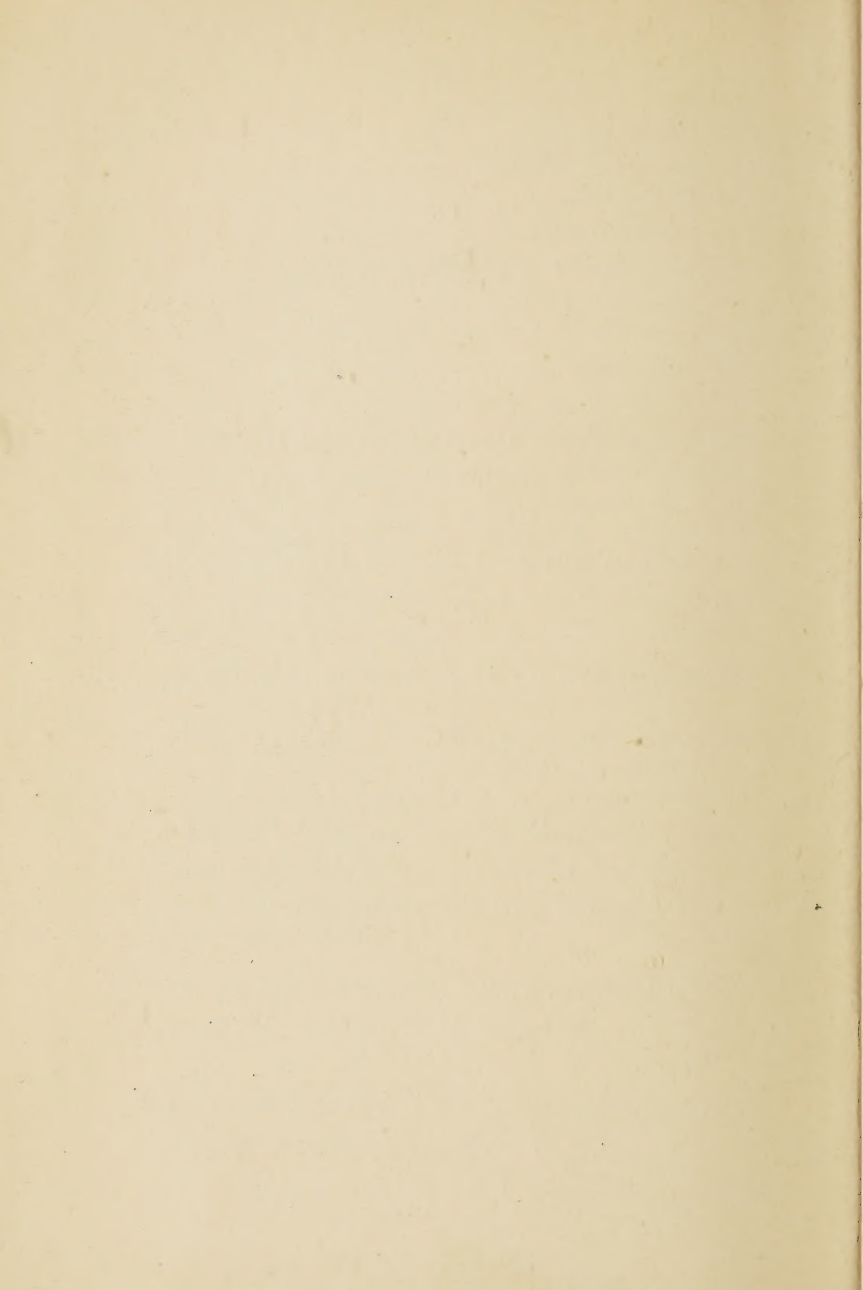
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THE ZEND-AVESTA

AND

THE RELIGION OF THE PÂRSÎS.

BY

J. MURRAY MITCHELL, M.A., LL.D.

(Formerly of Bombay).



THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY:

56, PATERNOSTER ROW; 65, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD; AND
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Argument of the Tract.

OF the great religions of antiquity that have survived to the present time, the system which is affirmed by its followers to have been promulgated by the famous Zoroaster is one of the most remarkable. It is now professed only by the Parsees of India and their brethren, the Zoroastrians of Persia ; but it was once a widely-extended and influential faith, with notable characteristics peculiar to itself. The sacred book of the Zoroastrians is the Zend-Avesta (or Avesta). Of the founder of the religion we cannot speak with certainty ; and the same thing may be said of the history of Zoroastrianism up to the time of Darius, the son of Hystaspes. Little was known in Europe regarding the system till 1771.

The Tract examines in succession the theology, the ritual, the ethics, and the jurisprudence of the Avesta. The theology is not homogeneous ; the Avesta contains a quasi monotheism, dualism, and polytheistic nature-worship. Starting with the same root-ideas as Hinduism, Zoroastrianism developed them differently ; it rose nearer to Monotheism, and it avoided Pantheism. One great excellence of the system is that it connects nothing immoral with the character or worship of God. Its most distinctive mark is its strong dualism ; it asserts the existence from eternity of two principles or powers—one good, one evil : the former the creator of all good, the latter the creator of all evil. The Zoroastrian must share in the great struggle between good and evil ; which is finally to issue in the triumph of the former. There is no image-worship in Zoroastrianism. Fire is the great visible object of homage. But everything in the good creation is, or may be, worshipped. Homage is rendered both to the outward object and the being presiding over it.

Nothing in the Zoroastrian ritual is more remarkable than its elaborate purifications in connection with ceremonial defilement. Among Gentile religions, Zoroastrianism ranks high in point of morality ; but the whole Avesta is lacking in depth both of reflection and emotion. Finally, a brief comparison is made between Zoroastrianism and Christianity.



THE ZEND-AVESTA

AND THE

RELIGION OF THE PÂRSÎS.



VERY few of the religions of antiquity have survived to the present day. For example, the impure divinities of Syria and the brutish gods of Egypt have completely disappeared.

Of the surviving religions of antiquity Zoroastrianism is one of the most remarkable.

Peor and Baalim
Forsake their temples dim. . .
Nor is Osiris seen
In Memphian grove or green,
Trampling the unshowered grass with lowings loud.

The divinities of Greece and Rome have, in like manner, passed away. Zeus no longer sways from the summit of Olympus his sceptre over “gods and men ;” and a Christian church now occupies the spot on which stood in ancient days the temple of Jupiter, the guardian of the Capitol.

Of those ancient systems of religion that have come down to our times one of the most remarkable

First
inculcated
by Zoro-
aster.

Still
followed
by the
Parsis.

is the one which is embodied in the Zend-Avesta.¹ The faith propounded in the Avesta is usually called Zoroastrianism; since, according to its professors, it was originally inculcated by the celebrated Zoroaster. It is also frequently called Pársíism, as being still followed by the interesting body of people in Western India, known by the name of Pársis, and also by the small remnant of the same race in Persia.

There are not a few questions connected with the Avesta and the history of Zoroastrianism which are still matters of keen controversy. We shall not enter into these, but shall, in a great degree, confine our attention to matters in which there exists a large measure of agreement among Oriental scholars. Happily, these are not few in number; nor are they by any means devoid of interest. In these days, when so much attention is paid to the comparative study of religions, the Avesta faith ought by no means to be overlooked. The system possesses some striking peculiarities. Farther, it has had a very remarkable history. Most important problems are involved in its relations to Hinduism, Judaism, the Babylonian religion, the Gnostic heresies, and the great system of Manicheism; and in the Mithraic mysteries,

It has
striking
peculiarities
and an
interesting
history.

¹ The name Avesta is more correct than Zend-Avesta. More exact would be the spelling *Avastá*; but we adopt the more usual form.

which were mainly of Persian origin, its influence spread extensively over the Roman empire, and even as far west as Britain.

Much had been written regarding Zoroaster, and many had been the speculations regarding his doctrines; but no satisfactory conclusions could be reached so long as the Avesta remained unknown. Even before the Christian era Zoroaster had become a mythical personage, and forged oracles were ascribed to him which only increased the perplexity. The laborious researches of scholars like Dr. Thomas Hyde¹ are deserving of high respect; but such men had to reason from *data* always insufficient and often untrustworthy. A new era in the study of Zoroastrianism began with the labours of Anquetil du Perron. The story of the travels and researches of this enthusiastic explorer reads almost like a romance. He went to India in quest of the venerable book ascribed to Zoroaster; found it among the Parsi priests of Surat; and, after years of toilsome investigation into its doctrines, returned in triumph with his prize to Europe. He published a French translation of it, with accompanying dissertations, in 1771. The work at once excited the greatest interest. This, after some time, began to diminish, mainly

Dr. Hyde's
researches.

Anquetil du
Perron.

¹ *Veterum Persarum et Parthorum et Medorum religionis historia*. 2nd edition. Oxford, 1760. The first edition, with a slightly different title, was published at Oxford in 1700.

in consequence of the faulty character of the translation, which was frequently very obscure, and not infrequently incorrect. During rather more than the last fifty years, however, the study of the Avesta has been prosecuted by a succession of able men with unflagging zeal, and with no inconsiderable success.

Date of the
Avesta.

We can trace the Avesta, as we find it, up to the time of the Sasanian dynasty in Persia. The Persian empire was restored in the year 226 after Christ by Ardashir Bâbegân, the first of the Sasanian line. He was a man of no common force of character; bold and successful as a warrior, and skilful in administration. In building up his kingdom he called religion to his aid. He earnestly sought to collect the writings that inculcated the ancient faith of Zoroaster; and several of his successors persevered in the attempt. The canon of the Avesta was fixed under Shâpur II., about the year 350; revision and condensation were effected in the reign of Khosru Parviz, between 531 and 579. The Avesta, as we possess it, may thus be safely traced back at least to the sixth century after Christ. We must allow for errors of transcription in the case of what had long been a dead language. Uncouth and unintelligible phrases abound in the work; the text is often manifestly incorrect, and critics are sorely tempted to try the undesirable expedient of conjectural

State of the
text.

emendation. Still, on the whole, here stands the Avesta, very nearly as it must have stood some thirteen, or even fifteen, centuries ago. But farther: although collected in the days of the Sasanian kings, we have no reason to believe that it was then *composed*. An extensive literature existed in Persia before the Macedonian conquest. The tradition of the Parsis is that Alexander—"the accursed wretch Sikandar," as they call him—burnt all their books, with the exception of a few fragments. The tradition cannot count for much; for the great conqueror was generally tolerant in matters of religion, and pursued, as far as possible, a policy of conciliation. The disappearance of the ancient books is rather to be regarded as the result of the centuries of confusion that succeeded the Macedonian conquest over the countries in which the Zoroastrian faith generally prevailed. Be this as it may, we have reason to believe that by far the greatest part of the Avesta was composed at various dates ranging over the space from about the seventh to the fourth century before Christ. Portions may be still more recent; and it is possible, and even probable, that some additions were made as late as the fourth century *after* Christ, or even later. The work, as it stands, is not only fragmentary, but chaotic; wonderfully little skill having been exhibited in the arrangement of its component parts.

Persian literature before the Macedonian conquest.

Disappearance of the ancient books.

The greater part of the Avesta probably composed between the 4th and 7th century B.C.

Portions more recent.

About Zoroaster himself we must say a few

Zoroaster
probably a
Mede.

His era.

words. Some able men doubt his very existence, and find in his history only a mythical description of elemental war—an atmospheric storm.¹ On the whole, however, we hold that he actually existed, and that he was possibly a Bactrian, but probably a Mede. There is reason to believe that, while the Medes were under Assyrian dominion, their religion had to some extent become mixed with that of the conquerors; but that, when the foreign yoke was thrown off, an earnest attempt was made to revive the ancient Aryan faith. With this reformation we may perhaps, provisionally, connect the name of Zoroaster. Thus, in round numbers, we can with some probability assign his era to the commencement of the sixth century, or perhaps 610 B.C. Such, at least, was Dr. Haug's final opinion.²

On these questions, however, we can as yet attain to no more than plausible conjecture, and all dogmatism is out of place.³ Even the name of

¹ Professor Darmesteter and others. See his treatise, *Ormuzd et Ahriman*, *passim*.

² Haug, who at first maintained that Zoroaster might have been as ancient as Moses, and must have been before 1000 B.C., in later years altered his opinion, and supported the view now expressed. It nearly agrees with that of the Parsis. But the question is by no means finally settled. Professors Roth and Tiele will not admit the older part of the Avesta to be later than from 1000 to 800 B.C.

³ M. Renan justly remarks: Il n'est pas bon dans ces difficiles études de croire tenir l'absolue vérité.—*Journal Asiatique*, 1880, p. 27.

the great teacher—in Zend, *Zarathustra*—has received no satisfactory explanation. We may believe—still, it is only a plausible conjecture—that the Avesta religion arose to the south-east of the Caspian Sea, among a race still semi-nomadic, but inclining more and more to pastoral and agricultural life. It seems to have powerfully affected Bactria and Media, before it entered Persia. In the last-named country the precepts of the Avesta were but partially submitted to during the earlier reigns, from that of Cyrus downwards; but the power of the Magi—the priests—with a short interruption after the death of the Pseudo-Smerdis, appears to have gone on steadily increasing, until the Macedonian conquest shattered it to pieces. The successors of Alexander reigned eighty years over Persia. Under the Parthian power which succeeded, the Magi slowly recovered a certain measure of their authority; and Valkhash (Vologeses), one of the later kings, seems to have begun the work of collecting the scattered fragments of the sacred books. The Parthian dominion was overthrown by Ardashir Bâbegân, who has been mentioned above; and, under him and his successors, Zoroastrianism obtained a far more influential position than it had ever previously held. This it retained until Persia was conquered by the Arabs, in the middle of the seventh century after Christ.

Late and slow growth of Zoroastrianism in Persia.

Its high place in the second Persian empire.

Division of
the Avesta.

The Avesta, as it now stands, is not so large in size as the Christian Bible. It consists of the following parts:—

The YASNA, including the five Gâthas, or Hymns.

The VANDIDAD.

The VISPARAD.

The YASHTS.

A few short prayers called AFRIGAN, NYAYISH, and GAH.

The SIROZAH, or Calendar of the thirty days of the month.

Prayers and
sacrificial
rites.

The meaning of the word Yasna is *sacrifice*. This division of the Avesta contains the prayers offered along with sacrificial rites. The Gâthas, which are its most important part, are written in a different dialect from the rest of the Avesta, and are very probably of a more ancient date.

The
legislation
of the
Avesta.

The Vandidad contains the legislation of the Avesta. The name is characteristic; it signifies *given against the demons*.

Objects
invoked.

The Visparad contains a collection of prayers very similar to those in the Yasna. The name means *all heads*, or *chiefs*; it is so called because the chief objects of the good creation are invoked in it.

The Yashts. This name is connected with

Yasna, which has been explained above. The term *yasht* properly means *worshipping*. A Yasht is properly a prayer or hymn in which one deity is more especially singled out for adoration.

Prayers
addressed to
one deity.

It certainly is not easy to see any logical principle ruling the division and arrangement of the parts of the Avesta.

We proceed, however, to the examination of the book as we find it. We shall speak successively of the following subjects:—

- I. The Theological system of the Avesta.
- II. The Ritual.
- III. The Ethical and Judicial systems.

I. THE THEOLOGY.

WHEN we proceed to examine the theology of the book we are at once struck with the conflicting character of its doctrines. We discover in one place either Monotheism, or what approaches it; in another place, decided Dualism; in a third, Polytheism. We cannot divest ourselves of the belief that such jarring creeds imply diversity of origin. If they arose in the same country, they must have done so at different epochs. Yet when we strive to arrange the systems in the chronological order of their sequence, we are perplexed by the fact that no division of the Avesta is homogeneous in its doctrine; discordant voices often

Conflicting
doctrines in
the theology.

unexpectedly break in upon us. The most that we can say is that the Gâthas, on the whole, come nearest to Monotheistic teaching; the Vandidad is more tinged with Dualism; while the Yasna (except the Gâthas) and the Visparad are more Polytheistic, and the Yashts are the most decidedly so of all. Difficult as it is to theorize on the chronological relations of these systems of thought, one is irresistibly driven to do so. Professor Spiegel, who has devoted a laborious life to the study of the Avesta, holds that the order was not first polytheism, then dualism, then monotheism, but that the monotheism preceded the dualism. We also believe that a kind of monotheism came first. But this point requires explanation.

Ahura Mazda and Varuna originally the same deity.

Their counterparts are Zeus and Jupiter.

The conception of a supreme divinity common to the great divisions of the Aryan race.

There can be little doubt that Ahura Mazda, the chief divinity in the Avesta, was originally the same as the Varuna Asura of the Veda. (Ahura is simply the Zend form of Asura, which means *Lord*.) Varuna is etymologically the same as the Greek *'ouparós*, heaven; and Varuna was the heaven-god. A very lofty character is ascribed to this deity; if the Veda ever approaches the conception of holiness, it is in connection with Varuna it does so. The counterparts of Varuna, the heaven-god, are found in Zeus, Jupiter, and Ahura Mazda; and it may be held as demonstrated that the conception of a supreme divinity, wise, powerful, and good, was common to the four great divisions of

the Aryan race,—the Greeks, Romans, Hindus, and Iranians. It must have belonged to them before they separated from each other. Yet, although supreme, this divinity was not sole; he was, in the phrase which meets us so frequently from the time of Homer downwards, “the father of gods and men;” but he received no exclusive homage.

The supreme divinity not sole.

After the other branches of the Aryan family had migrated to the west, the Iranians and Hindus evidently remained for some time together; and hence, many elements are common to the two systems of religious thought. But, ere long, the Indo-Iranian stream divided into two parts, which were never to re-unite. Each of the two systems of faith now received its own special development.

Iranians and Hindus.

In India, Varuna was gradually divested of his serene majesty. Even in Vedic times Indra, the tumultuous god of the lower sky, who had none of his lofty attributes, was exalted into the place of Varuna; and other gods were gradually multiplied. But in Irân the authority of Ahura Mazda (*i.e.*, the wise Lord¹) became more fully recognized than before. His moral attributes also were never obscured. Still, Ahura Mazda falls very far below the divinity who is revealed in the Jewish Scriptures. He is not a purely spiritual being. He is

Varuna lost his high position in India.

Not so Ahura Mazda.

Still the character of the latter is very defective.

Not a purely spiritual being.

¹ Haug does not admit that Mazda means *wise*. He renders it *joint-creator*, or *creator of all*.

The evil principle everlasting as truly as Ahura.

Various representations concerning Ahura.

not omnipresent, nor omnipotent. He is not creator of all things; for the Evil Principle, residing in primeval darkness, is from everlasting as truly as Ahura himself. There is an inconsistency in the statements regarding Ahura's relation to the Amesha-spentas (literally, *holy immortals*), who are a kind of archangels. They are said to be seven; but this number is made up only by including Ahura Mazda as one of them,—while yet, in many passages, he is said to have created them. Ahura is represented as praying for help even to such inferior divinities as Mithra, Anâhit, Tistriya, and Vâyu, who preside respectively over the sun (see *infra*), the waters, the star Sirius, and the wind. Again, Ahura is repeatedly called “the greatest of the *yazatas*,”—a name generally given to divinities of the second class. There is also considerable confusion in the statements regarding his relation to Spenta Mainyu, the good or beneficent spirit. Ahura is frequently identified with the latter; but in many places a kind of distinction is preserved. Dr. Haug represents the Gâthas—which inculcate, as he maintains, the original Zoroastrian faith—as asserting that from the beginning there was a pair of beings—twins—in Ahura Mazda; one of whom was the good spirit, and the other the evil spirit.¹

¹ They are the two moving causes in the universe, united from the beginning, and therefore called twins. They are present everywhere; in Ahura Mazda as well as in men.—*Haug's Essays*, p. 303.

This seems to involve the tremendous consequence that evil is an essential attribute of the self-existent deity—a tenet with which we are reluctant to charge the Avesta. The view of Haug—that the two opposed spirits are *in* Ahura Mazda,—seems scarcely borne out by the original text; and even if it were, we must not press too far the logical result of certain phrases. The Avesta in truth contains no reasoned-out system; but its whole teaching asserts that to the nature of God evil is abhorrent. The Avesta has, indeed, a very imperfect conception of what sin and evil are; but, so far as its knowledge goes, it denounces and detests them.

No reasoned-out system in the Avesta.

Closely connected with Ahura is a hierarchy of celestial beings, the Amesha-spentas,¹ mentioned above. They are very generally adored along with Ahura. Thus: “We sacrifice to Ahura Mazda, bright and glorious; we sacrifice to the Amesha-spentas, all-ruling, all-beneficent.”² The function of these “holy immortals” is to inspect and aid the whole of the good creation. Their designations are as follows:—

The Amesha-spentas, or celestial hierarchy.

The designations of the holy immortals.

1. Vohumano (literally, *good mind*). The name

¹ The term Amesha-spentas was in later times corrupted into Amshaspands; and the names now usually assigned them are as follows:—Bahman, Ardibahisht, Shahrivar, Spendermad, Khordâd, and Amerdâd. None of these names has any resemblance to the Hebrew name of any angel or archangel.

² Haptân Yasht 6.

- The genius of truth. originally denotes submission to the revealed law. He became the genius of truth, and also of flocks.
- Truth and holiness. 2. Asha vasistha (*the best rectitude*) denotes conformity to divine order; truth and holiness. He presides over fire. He also cures diseases.
- Supreme sovereignty. 3. Khshathra vairya (*supreme sovereignty*). He represents royal dominion. He presides over metals.
- The genius of the earth. 4. Spenta Armaiti (*holy wisdom*). She became the genius of the earth.
- Health and immortality. 5, 6. Haurvatât and Ameretât are generally mentioned together. Their names signify *health* and *immortality*. They denote the fulness of blessing.
- The Amesha-spentas in the Gâthas. In the Gâthas, the Amesha-spentas seem abstract ideas, or qualities, rather than personal beings. Their names sound like attributes of Ahura Mazda; and many passages appear to require them to be so understood. In others they are represented as his gifts bestowed on faithful worshippers. If not attributes, their relation to Ahura Mazda is such that we are almost compelled to conclude either that they were simply repetitions of him—seven being a kind of sacred number among the Aryans, as well as various other races,—or that there were seven original separate divinities, of whom Ahura was chief. In any case, the distinction between Ahura and the Amesha-spentas became clearer as time went on. They latterly formed a kind of celestial council.

Yazatas. This term means *worthy of worship*, and is occasionally used in that comprehensive sense. More frequently, however, it denotes a very large class of beings who are inferior in point of dignity to the Amesha-spentas. Very many of them resemble divinities of the Vedas; but others have no counterparts in the Indian system.

The Yazatas, or inferior celestial beings.

Of the first kind are genii presiding over natural objects, especially those connected with the four elements—fire and light, air, earth, and water.

Very great importance is attached to Fire (Âtar); so much so that the Persians have often been called

Great importance attached to Fire.

par excellence fire-worshippers. Atar is the son of Ahura Mazda;¹ he is the beneficent, the warrior; he is a full source of glory, a full source of healing.

Characteristics of Atar (fire).

He is a most potent opponent of the evil principle.² He is most quick and powerful in helping those that bring him dry wood, well cleansed, and well examined in the light of day.³ The fire is never to be allowed to go out. Its altar must be kept pure; it is a heinous sin to pollute the sacred element in any way whatever.

Airyaman is also a genius of fire. He is the much-desired. The prayer addressed to him is called the mightiest of spells: the most healing of all cures for disease. Every form of evil flees before it.

Airyaman a genius of fire.

¹ Sirozah i. and ii. 9. ² Farvardin Yasht xxii. 77, 78.

³ Atash Nyâyish 16.

Great
importance
also attached
to Light.
Mithra.

Functions
and attri-
butes of
Mithra.

Spread of
the worship
of Mithra.

Tistriya.

Equal importance is attached to the genii connected with Light. A very high place among these is assigned to Mithra. He is originally the god of the luminous heaven. As such he knows everything; having a thousand ears and ten thousand eyes. He is strong, sleepless, ever watching. He is the lord of wide pastures. He swings in his hands a club with a hundred knots, the strongest of all weapons. With arms uplifted he drives in a beautiful chariot of gold, which is drawn on one wheel by four swift horses, living on heavenly food, and deathless, whose forefeet are shod with gold, and their hind feet with silver. He is the strongest, the most valiant, the most active, the most fiend-smiting of all gods. He precedes the undying, swift-horsed sun; which, in later days, came to be identified with him. The praises heaped upon Mithra make him almost equal to Ahura Mazda, with whom he is especially associated, — “May Mithra and Ahura, the high gods, come to our help!”¹ It was towards the Christian era that the worship of Mithra, mixed apparently with cruel rites borrowed from Babylon, spread far and wide in the west.

Another exalted being is Tistriya, the genius of the star Sirius. He presides over the first month of summer. He is the great leader of the fixed stars in their contest with the planets; for, sin-

¹ Mihir Yasht 113.

gularly enough, these two classes of beings are opposed to each other in the great strife between good and evil. Tistriya is the chief author of rain; he is the chief opponent of Apaosha, the fiend who causes drought. Tistriya, in the shape of a beautiful white horse with golden ears and harness, meets the fiend in the shape of a black horse, black with black ears, black with a black back, black with a black tail, stamped with brands causing terror. They meet, hoof against hoof, and fight for three days and three nights. Tistriya is beaten and flees. He loudly complains that men do not sacrifice to him as they do to other *yazatas*; otherwise, he would have had the strength of ten horses, ten camels, ten bulls, ten mountains, and ten rivers. Ahura Mazda comes to his aid by offering him a sacrifice. He returns and vanquishes the fiend; and then come wind and cloud and rain and sleet, and the seven continents of the world are soon refreshed by "the friendly showers, the fertilizing waters."¹ Ahura Mazda says of "the bright and glorious Tistriya," "I have created him as worthy of sacrifice, prayer, propitiation, and glorification as myself, Ahura Mazda."

A leader in the strife between good and evil.

Conflict with Apaosha.

His defeat.

His rescue.

Ahura Mazda's testimony concerning him.

Of the genii of the waters the most celebrated is Ardvi sura Anâhit, *i.e.*, the high, powerful, undefiled. She descends from the region of the stars. She is

Genii of the waters. Anâhit.

¹ Tir Yasht 20-33.

What she
does.

wide-spreading, health-giving, herd-increasing, fold-increasing. She guards living beings, as a shepherd does his flock. She has a thousand reservoirs and a thousand channels, each as large as a man could ride across in forty days, mounted on a good horse. Ahura Mazda created for her four horses—wind, rain, cloud, and sleet—so that it is continually blowing, raining, hailing, or snowing on earth. She has a golden necklace on her beautiful neck, and golden rings in her ears. The description of the goddess is very graphic; and it has been suggested that it must have been drawn from the inspection of a statue raised in her honour. This is possible, as Artaxerxes Mnemon erected statues to her, and is said to have introduced her worship among the Persians.¹ She seems to have become identified with the Babylonian goddess Mylitta, whose attributes were ascribed to the genius of the waters; although originally the latter was very unlike in character to the immoral “queen of heaven.”

Description
of her.

Vegetable
world.
Homa.

Of the productions of the vegetable world the most celebrated was Homa, or Haomo. The Homa is a plant with thick stalks and yellow flowers, growing chiefly on the mountains of Ghilan in northern Persia. The Avesta speaks of it in the most exalted terms. It flourishes in resplendent

How the
Avesta
speaks of it.

¹ It existed, however, before his time, for Herodotus mentions it.

glory on "the highest height" of the heavenly mountain Hara Berezaity; ¹ its juice cures all ills of mind and body. The juice is extracted by pounding the plant with a pestle in a mortar. It is the enlivening, the beautiful, the lordly, the golden-eyed, ² the victorious, ³ and the giver of victory. It is the most precious part of the offering. Later Parsiism—though not the Avesta—speaks of two Homas,—a terrestrial one which is yellow, and a celestial one which is pure white.

Effects of
its juice.

This exaltation of Homa in the Avesta reminds us of the position assigned in the Veda to Soma. (The two words are the same, with the usual dialectic difference.) Soma, among the Hindus, became a still mightier deity than Homa, being sometimes called the creator of heaven and earth.

The spirits of the air are not of much importance. The most important is Vâyu—the wind; who is said to belong in part to the good, and in part to the bad, creation. The reason of this distinction is obvious; but it is remarkable that the same division is not made in the case of fire and water.

Genii of the
air,

Of the spirits of the earth the most important is Spenta Armaiti, who is also one of the Amesha-spentas.

and of the
earth.

¹ Gosh Yasht, 17.

² Ashi Yasht 37.

³ Bahram Yasht 57.

Divinities
not known to
the Hindus.

The beings hitherto mentioned, with the exception of Anâhit, were originally common to the Indo-Iranian race. There are other divinities who are of purely Iranian origin, and unknown in India. The most important of these are the following.

Sraosha the
genius of
obedience.

Sraosha. This name is derived from a verb signifying *to hear*. Sraosha is the genius of obedience to the law. He is a mighty-speared and lordly divinity; tall in form, fiend-smiting, the best protector of the poor, guarding the faithful like a shepherd's dog. Like Mithra, he never sleeps; he watches all the world with club uplifted, from the hour when the sun is down; indeed, since "the two spirits made the world" he has never slept; night and day he battles with the demons. His strong arm smites, and their skulls are shattered by the blow.

The holy
formulæ.

The Law (daena) and the holy formulæ or spells are also worshipped as divine. So are the sacred books, especially the Gâthas. Sacrifice is offered to them, and they are frequently invoked for aid.

Ashi Vanguhi (*good piety*) is highly celebrated. She is beautiful; her rays are far-piercing; she brings all earthly blessings. Splendid garments, and hoards of silver and gold brought from distant lands are the portion of her votaries.

The
Fravashis—
a remark-
able class of
beings.

A very remarkable class of divinities is that of the Fravashis. There is considerable obscurity—not

to say contradiction—in the descriptions of them. Originally they probably were the souls of the dead; but, in process of time, all living beings—animals, as well as men—sky, waters, earth, fire, and plants, were believed to have each a fravashi. Beings yet unborn possess them. Even Ahura Mazda has a fravashi. The fravashi seems sometimes a kind of guardian angel; sometimes it nearly corresponds with the archetypal ideas of the Platonic philosophy. It is quite possible that the original conception of the fravashi was modified in later times by Babylonian ideas. “The awful fravashis of the faithful” are irresistible, overpowering. Ahura Mazda confesses that they bring him assistance; indeed, it is through their brightness and glory that he maintains the sky and the life-giving waters; and had not the fravashis of the faithful helped him, the whole material world would have fallen under the power of the demons.

What they were and came to include.

Space is also worshipped.¹ So is Time. There are both “the sovereign time of the long period,” and “time without bounds.” Space and Time are not personified; they have no genius specially connected with them. The position held by “boundless Time” has led to some controversy. A text which means “*in* boundless Time”² had been rendered by Anquetil “*by* boundless Time”; and on this mainly was founded the belief that

Space and

¹ Larger Sirozah 30, 21.

² Vand. xix. 9.

infinite Time was the supreme divinity of the Avesta.¹ Undoubtedly an influential sect of Zoroastrians—the Zarvanites—held this doctrine in the time of the Sasanian kings; and indeed it had been known from before the Christian era. Still, it is certainly not the doctrine of the Avesta proper; it is a later refinement introduced by speculative minds.

The whole
of the good
creation is
worshipped.

It seems needless to go into greater detail. Suffice it to say that there is nothing in the whole of the good creation that is not held to be deserving of worship. Prayers are addressed to human souls, the souls of animals, vegetables, springs of water, rivers, mountains, the earth, the wind, the sky, the stars, etc., etc. In the case of those objects that have a presiding divinity, it must be carefully noted that the homage is rendered *both* to the divinity and the outward object. It is often difficult to say which is intended; in fact, the mind of the worshipper oscillates between them, and frequently blends, not to say confounds, the two. But so it was in Greece and Rome,—the river and the river-god were the same, yet different;—and so it is among the Hindus. The question as to the real object of the invocation is less difficult when an abstract conception—a quality or a feeling—is exalted to divinity. In such cases the abstract idea is personalized and worshipped. In other

Worship of
abstract
ideas.

¹ So Gibbon, and many more.

words, the being who presides over, or inspires, the feeling, is the object addressed ; there are not two objects. Even so the Greeks and Romans worshipped the goddess of love, the goddess of wisdom, the god of war, and so on. The only peculiarity lies in the great extent to which the Zoroastrian carries the personifications and deifications.

We may quote the following prayer, offered on the last day of each month, as giving a good idea of the remarkable manner in which different objects of worship are thrown together in the invocations.

Specimen of
prayers.

30th day. (*Dedicated to*) *Aneran* (i.e. *Anaghra*, or *Infinite Light*.)

We sacrifice to the eternal and sovereign luminous space. We sacrifice to the bright Garônmana [heaven]. We sacrifice to the sovereign place of eternal weal. We sacrifice to the Chinvat bridge, made by Mazda. We sacrifice to Apâm Napât, the swift-horsed, the high and shining lord, who has many wives. We sacrifice to the water made by Mazda and holy. We sacrifice to the golden and tall Homa. We sacrifice to the enlivening Homa, who makes the world grow. We sacrifice to Homa, who keeps death far away. We sacrifice to the pious and good Blessing. We sacrifice to the awful, powerful, cursing thought of the wise, a god. We sacrifice to all the holy gods of the heavenly world. We sacrifice to all the holy gods of the material world. I praise, I invoke, I meditate on, and we sacrifice to, the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the holy ones.

We proceed now to speak of evil beings. The Avesta, as Professor Darmesteter rather sarcastically remarks, is "very rich in demons." Daevas, drujas, yâtus, pairikas, dvarants, dregvants, and

Evil beings

so on ; we have them of varied classes, and in numbers without number.¹

The chief
evil being,
Angro
Mainyus
(Ahriman),
the hurtful
spirit.

The chief of these—and the creator of all of them—is Angro mainyus or Ahriman. His name in Zend means *hurtful spirit*. He is from all eternity ; he is wholly evil ; his original dwelling was in primeval, uncreated darkness, which existed in boundless space, far apart from the primeval, uncreated light. Angro mainyus was at first ignorant of the productions, and apparently of the existence, of the good spirit ; but when he became aware of these, he “broke into the fair creation,”² determined to counterwork, and if possible destroy, it. For

¹ The dualism of the Avesta has sometimes been called the product of philosophic thought. But the Medo-Persian, while strong in action, was in speculation weak. And dualism exists among some very simple races ; for example, the Santals of India. These hold the sun-god to be good. All other super-human beings are malevolent ; and every calamity comes from the demons. Even so, the Zoroastrian ascribed all evil to the demons. Demons were therefore multiplied ; for he had many evils to contend with. Unlike the Hindus in their progress down the rich Gangetic valley, he had to maintain a perpetual struggle for existence. Cold blasts from the Caspian and the Elburz mountains chilled his blood and killed his crops ; in summer he suffered from drought ; and he was perpetually in danger from the incursions of savage nomades. All such misfortunes were, he believed, the work of devils. Then, as the conception of the moral character of Ahura Mazda was developed, the conception of his adversary, Ahriman, was developed proportionally ; the brighter light caused a darker shadow. Dualism thus sprang from no profound speculation. A higher idea of Divine power or a deeper insight into the moral government of the world would have checked its growth.

² Farvardin Yasht 77.

every pure being created by the good spirit, Angro mainyus created a corresponding evil being; in place of health, he made disease;¹ and for life, death. The good spirit (we have seen) is surrounded by six immortal holy ones. Angro mainyus created six arch-demons, the grisly council of hell, whose very names seem mockeries of those of the pure hierarchy of heaven. The entire struggle between good and evil—light and darkness—lasts for twelve thousand years; and we are now in the thick of the fight. All creation is divided, and ranged in two hostile camps. Angels, men, animals, plants, and inanimate nature are so. Even the heavenly bodies are divided: the fixed stars are on the side of the right, while the planets are with the evil one. It is not easy (as we have said above) to see why this distinction between stars and planets is made; but, for the sake of symmetry, some division of the heavenly bodies was required. The side assigned to animals is often no less surprising; thus, frogs, turtles, cats, and even ants are partizans of the demon. But the world-wide contest is not to endure for ever. Zoroaster was created by Ahura Mazda to oppose the great enemy and all his auxiliary hosts. Zoroaster was the only being that could daunt Angro mainyus.² He smote the fiend with the

His council.

The great struggle between good and evil lasts twelve thousand years.

Not to endure for ever.

¹ He created 99,999 diseases. A favourite number in the Avesta.

² Ashi Yasht 20.

Its final
issue.

holy spells, and especially with the one called Ahuna vairya (or Honover), which was as strong a weapon as a stone of the size of a house. Still, however, the battle raged. Three sons of Zoroaster will yet be miraculously born,¹ who will carry on his work, in which the last of them—Soshyant, or Sosiosh—will be completely victorious. Angromainyus will be overthrown; he will be cast into hell, and (as is generally held) destroyed. Then comes the *frasho-kereti*, the perpetuation of life. The fair creation that had been slain by the fiend revives; the good live in a renovated world; and everlasting joy prevails.

The battle
field.

The Avesta does not explain how the good spirit left the region of uncreated light, and the bad spirit that of uncreated darkness. Both of these regions are finite in extent, existing in infinite space; and the battle-field lies between them.

Heaven.

Garonmâna is often mentioned as the dwelling-place of Ahura Mazda. The name means “the house of song.” Ahura there sits on a throne of gold, surrounded by the Amesha spentas and Yazatas. Paradise is often identified with it.

Hell.

Hell is full of darkness and horror. It is situated

¹ We might explain how; but our readers would not pardon us if we did. The whole representation is outrageously extravagant. Yet the Avesta stands committed to the worst part of it. See Yasht xiii. 62.

in the north, under the earth ; its mouth is beside the mountain Arezura. In heaven the good are fed with butter made in spring ; in hell the wicked eat poison, and have to endure a poisonous stench. It would seem that the good man at death is conducted to Garonmâna, the heaven of Ahura ; but that (as has just been said) the earth after its renovation becomes his dwelling-place.

The food of
heaven and
hell.

II. THE RITUAL.

THE following remarks may suffice as a statement of the chief ritual observances of the Parsis. We shall speak in succession of their care of the sacred fire, their prayers, offerings, and purifications.

The fire is kept in a special building called Âtash Bahram ; in the innermost, and most sacred division of the building. This is separated from the rest by a wall ; but the door remains open. The fire is kept burning day and night ; it would be regarded as an awful calamity if it were to be extinguished. It is constantly watched by two priests. The fire is on a stone altar, and is within an urn, which is occasionally of silver, but generally of bronze. The urn may be of any size ; Anquetil saw one which was three feet and a half in height. The fire is large, and the flames rise high. It is fed chiefly with sandal wood. No

The sacred
fire.

It is fed
with sandal
wood chiefly.

Other fuel.

moist or green wood can be used. The priest has a pair of tongs about one foot and a half in length, with which he supplies large pieces of wood as required. Incense of gum benzoin is also burnt along with the sandal wood; and for this a large spoon is used. There is a room in the building for storing sandal wood, quantities of which are brought by worshippers; and this the priests cut up into suitable pieces. Everything issuing from the mouth defiles; hence the lower part of the face of the priest is covered with a veil of muslin, to prevent his breath reaching the sacred element.

Prayer, how
offered in
public.

Prayers are chaunted *memoriter* by the priest (Mobed), in front of the fire. Every portion of the day has its allotted prayer. While these are offered within the inner apartment, the people without read or repeat prayers, facing the fire. These are in Zend, in the Gujarâtî character; they are pronounced generally without being understood. Every man prays by himself; there is no common worship. Sometimes the worshipper may add an extempore supplication of his own in the vernacular. Women occasionally attend.

While praying, the priest holds in his left hand the *barsom* (beresma). This originally was a bundle of small twigs, generally of date or pomegranate, bound tightly together with a small twig. It is now generally composed of small silver rods.

The priest sits with his legs crossed, when repeating the prayers, holding the barsom in his left hand. Prayers for the dead are recited daily in the Atesh Bahram. Richer people generally have the service performed in their own houses; but poor people come to the fire-temple. The Mobed performs this service in the forenoon, chaunting a particular kind of prayer called Afrigan. It is especially during the recitation of these prayers that the *barsom* is now used.

So much for public worship; but even the domestic fire is always sacred, and must be treated as such. It, too, must never be extinguished. In the first part of the night, in the second, and the third, "Fire calls for help to the master of the house: 'Up! put on thy girdle over thy clothes, wash thy hands, take wood, bring it to me, and let me burn bright.'"¹ This threefold call must be obeyed. Now-a-days the Parsis usually cover the fire with ashes at night, to prevent its going out; and in the morning the first food it gets must be sandal wood. The mistress of the house attends to this duty. A handful of sandal wood is put on the fire by each member of the family.

The domestic fire is also sacred.

We may next speak of offerings. When asked how the demon could be repelled by him, Zoroaster said: "The sacred mortar, the sacred cup,

Offerings—how made.

Sacred implements.

¹ Vandidad xviii. 18-22.

the Homa, and the words taught by Mazda; these are my weapons, my best weapons.”¹ All these things occupy an important place in connexion with offerings.

The sacred mortar.

The mortar (hâvana) is of metal, as is also the pestle. In it are pounded small twigs of the Homa plant, which was referred to above (p. 20). Water is added to the sap which is expressed, and the mixture when filtered is collected in a “sacred cup.” When the due prayers have accompanied the process of preparation, this liquid becomes endowed with almost divine attributes.

The sacred cup.

The Soma of the Hindus was fermented and intoxicating; and no doubt it was the great exhilaration produced by the beverage that led a simple-minded people to ascribe to it such transcendent attributes and powers. The Avesta supplies no evidence of the Iranians confounding intoxication with a divine afflatus.² So far well; only, no explanation then remains of the boundless and endless laudation of Homa. The Magi seem never to have asked themselves why tasting the least drop of this disagreeable drink should destroy a thousand devils.³

The great Iranian heroes of the ancient times

¹ Vandidad xix. 9.

² Ahura Mazda is described as “never intoxicated” (Vand. xix. 20). To Indra, on the contrary, the Veda says: “Thy inebriety is intense.”

³ Yasna x. 14 (De Harlez, p. 287).

offered up animal sacrifices. Thus Thraetono offered up to Ashi Vanguhi a sacrifice of a hundred male horses, a thousand oxen, and ten thousand lambs.¹ The practice of animal sacrifice was continued to a late period; for Xerxes sacrificed at the site of Troy, "a thousand oxen, while the Magi poured out libations in honour of the ancient heroes."² Animal sacrifices are not unknown in the Vandidad. Thus, for a certain very grave offence the guilty person must "slay a thousand head of small cattle, and offer the entrails to the fire."³ In other cases also animal offerings were required, until in comparatively recent times; but all such observances seem now to have entirely ceased.

Animal sacrifice was offered in ancient days.

Not so now.

But the normal offering was different. It was presented by Ahura Mazda himself to Anâhita, "with homa and flesh, the baresma, the wisdom of the tongue, the deeds, the libations, and the rightly spoken words."⁴ (The wisdom of the tongue means, no doubt, the sacred formulæ.)

The normal offering.

In the present day, however, the flesh (myazda) has ceased to be offered. The priest takes the cup containing the Homa in his right hand, raises it in his right hand before the sacred fire, and drinks a small quantity. The rest is poured into a well.

¹ Aban Yasht 33.

² Herodotus vii. 43. So also the Magi "propitiated the river Strymon by sacrificing white horses to it."—Herod. vii. 113.

³ Vand. xviii. 70.

⁴ Aban Yasht 17.

The Homa offering is made in private houses as well as in fire-temples ; and the ceremony should be performed twice a day. The other offerings are chiefly bread, flowers, fruits,—especially dates and pomegranates—leaves, mainly those of pomegranates, branches of homa, and less frequently fresh milk.

Offerings are still made to the sea, consisting chiefly of flowers and fruits, such as cocoa nuts. On one remarkable occasion in Bombay there was an offering of thirty (if it was not three hundred) tubs of sugar candy.

Purification
from
ceremonial
defilement
is of
supreme
importance.

Ceremonial purity is with the Parsi a matter of supreme importance. Defilement is easily incurred, and hence the means of purification are earnestly prescribed in the Avesta. The glory of the Zoroastrian law is said to consist in its so fully and clearly declaring the ceremonies needful for cleansing the defiled.

The distinction between ceremonial and moral defilement is far from clear in the Avesta. The one is regarded as equally dreadful with the other, and as requiring equal expiation. Nay, the Avesta would regard the crime of murder as less heinous than that of a single man carrying a dead body to the sepulchre.

Means of
purification.

The great material agents of purification are water and *gomez*, or *nirang* (*urina bovis*). But the efficacy of these agents depends on their right pre-

paration and application. Should the requisite ceremonies and prayers have been neglected, the potency of the means is gone; and then, as Anquetil puts it, there is "no purification, no purifier, no priest, and no Parsi!"

Everything that issues from the human body is regarded as dead, and as belonging to the demons.

Even the hair and nails when cut off are the same; and elaborate prescriptions are given as to their disposal. If these rites are neglected, and the hair and nails allowed to fall about as they may, the power of the demons is increased as much as if a sacrifice were offered them. Holes must therefore be dug, far away from fire, water, and the barsom, and the nails and hair must be deposited separately in these; three, six, or nine furrows must be drawn around the holes with a knife, and certain prayers must be offered. When all this is rightly performed, a certain bird eats up the nails (it does not seem that the bird does the same to the hair); otherwise they would have become so many spears, knives, bows, arrows, and sling-stones in the hands of the demons. It is right to mention, however, that these ceremonies are often neglected by modern Parsis, at least in India.

Disposal of
hair and
nails.

The great source of defilement is contact with a dead body.¹ In death is the chief triumph of the

Defilement
from contact
with a dead
body.

¹ "It grieves the sun, O holy Zoroaster, to shine upon a man defiled by the dead; it grieves the moon; it grieves the stars."

demon. Hence the dread of death, which is sufficiently marked among the Hindus, becomes still more intense among the Parsis. The moment the breath is out, the fiend (Druj) Nasu rushes upon it from the regions of the north, in the shape of a raging fly. The body is now utterly unclean, and pollutes every one near it. But the demon can be expelled by bringing in "a dog with four eyes"—a white dog, according to modern usage,—and the Druj, as soon as the dog looks at the body, flies back to hell.¹

How, in
such cases,
the demon
is expelled.

From the living who have been polluted by contact with the dead, the Druj is expelled by the application of consecrated water and *nirang*,—in some cases by using only one of these. By a most complex form of ceremonies the demon is driven from post to post—all down from the top of the head to the point of the toes; and when the prescribed prayers accompany all this, the triumph is complete, and the baffled fiend flies back to the regions of the north "in the shape of a raging fly, with knees and tail sticking out, all stained with stains, and

(Vand. ix. 41). Or as Professor De Harlez renders it: "It is with regret the sun shines on the impure; it is in spite of themselves that the moon and stars give him light."

¹ Vandidad xvii. 9, 10. Darmesteter holds the text to be genuine which declares the corpse to be in the power of the *druj* (demon) until the dog has seen it or "eaten it up, or until flesh-eating birds have flown to it" (Vand. vii. 3). We have the same thing distinctly mentioned of the dog in Vand. viii. 3.

like in appearance to the foulest monsters.”¹ About thirty parts of the body are mentioned, from which the demon has to be successively expelled; it is a terribly long battle, but it ends in certain victory.

The greatest of all the purifications is the Barashnûm, a ceremony which lasts for nine nights. (The signification of the name is not fully ascertained.) Originally the rite was used only as a means of removing the defilement arising from contact with a corpse of a dog or a man. But it has long been used to cleanse away defilement in other cases. Nine holes have to be dug in a space cleared from trees; a furrow has to be drawn round each with a metal knife, and other furrows up to the number of twelve; three holes hold water, six hold *nirang*; prayers are recited; the unclean person is sprinkled with *nirang* from a spoon of brass or lead; the hands are then washed first, otherwise everything goes wrong; then the various parts of the body are sprinkled, as mentioned in last paragraph, until finally the demon, whose power has been becoming weaker at each sprinkling, is completely beaten off and driven away to hell.

The chief purification—the Barashnum.

The new-born child must be washed with water,—not generally now with *nirang*; before this, it is impure. Before the age of fifteen, and generally between nine and eleven, initiation into the Zoroastrian faith takes place by means of prayers, purifications,

Initiation into Zoroastrianism how performed.

¹ Vandidad viii. 71.

and the putting on of the *kusti*¹ (a string made of seventy-two woollen threads twisted together), and the *sadarah* or sacred shirt, which is of muslin with short sleeves. If after the age of fifteen any one walks four steps without these accoutrements, the demons wither him up, and he himself becomes a hobgoblin. All of this applies equally to men and women. Except during ablutions, the *kusti* and *sadarah* must be worn day and night.

A spiritual teacher should be provided for the young Parsi.

Morning
purification.

Every morning fresh *nirang* is brought to the house. The hands are dipped into it; then a small quantity is applied to the face, hands, and feet. But in greater purifications the liquid is drunk; three sips are taken. Then (probably to banish the taste) pomegranate leaves are chewed,—though this seems no part of the prescribed ritual.

Treatment
of the dead.

When any one dies, men first wash the body, dress it in white garments, and lay it on a stone slab in the front room. The priest comes and reads prayers. The women are in the same room with the body, the men outside. During the last prayer a white dog, kept usually in the fire-temple, is brought near the corpse, and induced, if possible, to look at it. Two, now generally four, men lay the body on an iron bier. The dog is commonly

¹ The threads of the *kusti* can be spun only by the wives of the Mobeds.

brought in twice; and the whole ceremony may occupy forty minutes. Then the body is borne off by the four men—a fifth man preceding to clear the way, so that not even the shadow of an unbeliever may fall on the corpse. The Mobeds walk two and two, generally holding a handkerchief between them. Ceremonies are performed close to the *dakhma*—or “tower of silence,” as it is usually called in English. This is a circular pit, very deep, round which is a stone pavement about seven feet wide. On this the corpses are exposed naked. The¹ face of the dead is uncovered; the birds of prey come in multitudes, and very soon the flesh is all devoured. Every morning the bones are swept down into the great receptacle—the pit.

The funeral procession.

The scene of the ceremonies.

Every day of the month is consecrated to some divinity. Besides this, the 1st, 8th, 15th, and 23rd days of the month are sacred to Ahura Mazda; from the 3rd to the 8th to the Amesha spentas. The six Gahambars are in commemoration of the six periods of creation.² The last is the most important. It lasts ten days—from 10th to 20th March—which is the end of the year. It is especially marked by ceremonies in commemoration of

Holy days.

¹ There is something touching in the expression used regarding the dead man: “Lay him down, clothed with the light of heaven, and beholding the sun.”—Vand. vi. 41.

² See Haug’s *Essays*, p. 192.

Commemora-
tion and
services for
the dead.

the dead. During these ten days the souls of the dead are believed to quit their dwellings in the other world, and revisit their relatives on earth.

Besides this, there are special services for the dead, performed on the day of the month on which they died.

Festivals.

The New Year is a great festival.

There is a festival in honour of Mithra at the autumnal equinox.

Every new moon and full moon are festivals.

Prayers have already been frequently mentioned as connected with various rites. But there are prayers for every division of the day. There are three different *gahs* between morning and evening, of different lengths; and two *gahs* from evening to morning, each six hours long. Different prayers are appointed for each *gah*.

The three
great
prayers,
viz. :—

There are three great prayers, the potency of which is extolled continually and in the strongest possible language. These are the Ahuna vairya, the Ashem Vohu, and the Yênhê Hâtâm.

The Ahuna
vairya.

The Ahuna vairya is so called from the three initial words *Yathâ ahu vairyo*. It existed before heaven, earth, water, or fire; and it is the most effective weapon that Ahura Mazda himself can use to crush the demons. It is much to be regretted that of this very important part of the Avesta, we have at least six conflicting versions from scholars

of high name. In the midst of this perplexity, the ordinary Parsi will console himself with the reflection that the efficacy of the prayer depends entirely on the right sounds being uttered, and not at all on the sense attached to them. But we cannot be certain even of the sounds; for the commentary on the prayer given in the 19th chapter (Ha) of the Yasna must be founded on readings considerably different from those which the present MSS. contain. The translation of Haug is the following: "*As a heavenly lord is to be chosen, so is an earthly master (spiritual guide) for the sake of righteousness, to be the giver of the good thoughts, the good actions of life towards Mazda; and the dominion is for the lord (ahura) whom he has given as a protector to the poor.*" With all possible respect to the learned man who supplies this version it is surely impossible that this can be the meaning of the most potent, "most fiend-smiting" prayer in the Avesta. Professor de Harlez paraphrases it thus: "*As there exists a supreme master, perfect, so there is a master of the law established to maintain and propagate holiness; the regulator of good thoughts and of actions springing out of the order of things referring to Mazda. Sovereign power belongs to Ahura; he has constituted him (viz., the master of the law) protector (shepherd) of the poor.*" Professor Darmesteter renders the prayer as follows: "*The will of the Lord is the law of holi-*

Haug's
translation.

De Harlez's
paraphrase.

Darmes-
teter's
reading.

ness. *The riches of Vohumano shall be given to him who works in the world for Mazda, and wields according to the will of Ahura the power he gave him to relieve the poor.*" The sense of the last rendering is clear; but it is not easy to see how the Professor extracts it from the present text. Finally, let it be remembered that *holiness* or *righteousness*, as used in this passage and elsewhere in the Avesta, merely means ceremonial purity.¹

The Ashem
Vohu
prayer.

The Ashem Vohu prayer, which, if not quite so potent, is used still more frequently than the Ahuna vairya, is translated by Haug as follows: "*Righteousness is the best good; a blessing it is; a blessing be to that which is righteousness towards perfect righteousness.*" Darmesteter makes it—"*Holiness is the best of all good. Well is it for that holiness which is the perfection of holiness.*"

We leave our readers to judge for themselves of the value of these much-lauded invocations,—if invocations they be. We need not add the third great "prayer"—the Yênhê Hâtâm.

Various
terms of
homage and
invocation.

The terms of homage and invocation used in the prayers are various. One frequently employed is *yazamaidê*, which Darmesteter renders literally, *we sacrifice to*. It also, however, means *we worship*,

¹ So even Haug admits. "It means what is right or meritorious in a ritualistic or materialistic sense, and does not necessarily imply holiness."—*Essays*, p. 141.

*we pray to.*¹ Other terms signify *to invoke, to praise, to glorify, to celebrate*. These words seem to be used indiscriminately; at least, no distinction can be perceived between the homage rendered to higher and to lower beings; assuredly there is no such difference implied as is drawn by certain theologians between *dulia* and *latria*.

But finally on this head. The prevailing conception of prayer in the Avesta is that of a spell or incantation. Sometimes, we hear of formulæ that are on no account to be communicated except to the nearest relatives. When we see how prayer is thus transformed into a species of conjuration, we cannot be surprised that the practice of magic, as the very name implies, has been so often traced back to the Magi, the followers of Zoroaster.

Prayer is a kind of incantation

It is remarkable that prayer itself is prayed to in the Avesta. The Ahuna vairya is especially thus honoured.²

Fasting occupies so important a place in most systems of religion that its entire absence from the list of prescribed duties in the Avesta attracts the more attention. There is no trace of asceticism in the Avesta precepts or the Parsi practice. The reader will at once see how much is involved in

No asceticism allowed.

¹ De Harlez renders it, not so exactly—*we honour*

² Hormazd Yasht 22, etc.

Zoroastrian
ideas of
eating,
drinking,
and health.

Self-denial
traced to the
influence of
demons.

this characteristic. Milton speaks of "spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet"; but to the Zoroastrian such language appears entirely ridiculous.¹ He holds that by good eating and drinking he keeps his body in health, and so fits himself to carry on a more vigorous warfare against the demon and all his works. Certainly, the typical Parsi is at the opposite pole of thought from the pale recluse, worn to a skeleton by abstinence and vigils; and when the bodily mortification is carried to still greater lengths, the Zoroastrian can only trace the self-denial to the influence of the demons.

In like manner, celibacy and monasticism can never in any way be approved by Zoroastrians.

III. THE ETHICAL AND JUDICIAL SYSTEMS.

It has been mentioned above that Ahura Mazda has no immoral attributes ascribed to him. As nothing evil can form a part of his worship, so nothing evil should be practised by his worshippers.

Division of
human
duty.

The Avesta frequently mentions a threefold division of human duty, viz., Good Thought, Good Word, and Good Deed.

It dwells earnestly on the importance of Truthfulness. Mithra, the divinity of Light, is especially the guardian of Truth; and "to lie to Mithra," or

¹ He who fills himself with food is filled with the good spirit much more than he who does not so.—Vand. iv. 48.

perjure oneself, is a very grievous sin. Promises and contracts must be faithfully observed. Duties and sins.

Kindness and charity to followers of the true faith are inculcated.

Theft, robbery, personal assault, and murder are all strongly reprobated.

Marriage is much encouraged. It is implied that monogamy was the general rule. Yet one extraordinary practice is recognized in the later books of the Avesta—marriage with the nearest of kin. The Parsis have naturally been slow to admit that brother was allowed to marry with sister, and even mother with son; but the testimony of ancient authors leaves little or no doubt as to the existence of such unnatural connexions.¹ Importance attached to marriage.

The practice of prostitution, adultery, sodomy, and such crimes is strongly denounced. Condemnation of certain offences.

¹ See Yasna xiii. 28. The rendering of this verse by Prof. De Harlez agrees with that of M. Hovelacque. It is as follows: "I praise marriage between relatives, pure, which is the greatest among marriages present or to come," etc. etc. Unless we are to discard the testimony of a multitude of Greek and Roman writers, marriages which we should call incestuous were pretty frequent among the Persians. It is for this reason the poet Catullus (Carmen xc. 4) exclaims against "the impious religion of the Persians" (*Persarum impia religio*). See the question carefully examined by Dr. West, *Pahlavi Texts*, Part II. Appendix p. 389, etc. Between the 6th and 9th centuries after Christ, marriages between the nearest of kin were earnestly recommended by the priests. Modern Parsis highly approve of the marriage of cousins german; but they discourage the union of those more nearly allied in blood.

The observance of magical rites is in a few cases mentioned and reprobated.

Agriculture
greatly
encouraged.

The Avesta dwells with all possible earnestness on the importance of agriculture. Its ideas on this subject are embodied in quaint, and sometimes coarse, phraseology; but it is interesting to note the anxiety of the authors of the Avesta that the people should cease to be nomadic and take to a settled life. "Whoso cultivates barley cultivates righteousness."¹

Evil
animals
must be
killed.

The putting to death of the creatures of the evil principle was a high religious duty. If the division of animals into good and bad had been less arbitrary, this might have called forth a half-approving smile; the slaughter of tigers, serpents, and other noxious creatures being surely a good thing. But when we hear of tortoises, frogs, cats, ants, etc., being proscribed, we are somewhat startled. With all the efforts of the Avesta to be exact, there seems to be no division of fishes, and no clear division of birds, into good and bad. Every creature being either of divine or demoniac origin, this omission

¹ Vand. iii. 25, 31. Dr. Haug reminds us that there are metrical lines and rhymes on this subject introduced into the usually very prosaic Vandidad. The chief metrical passage may be rendered thus :—

When the barley appears, the demons pine;
When the barley is threshed, the demons whine;
When the barley is ground, the demons fly;
When the meal is prepared, the demons die.

is—on the principles of the Avesta itself—a grievous fault.

The place assigned to the dog is very notable. One entire division of the Avesta is devoted to the celebration of his excellence. The shepherd's dog and the house dog are highly lauded; but the dog of dogs is the water dog, whoever he may be.¹ The murder of such a dog is inconceivably heinous. "Sweetness and fatness will never return to the place where it has been committed, until the murderer has been smitten to death, and the holy soul of the dog has been offered a sacrifice for three days and three nights, with fire blazing, with the baresma tied, and the homa uplifted."² And the reason of all this is that out of every thousand common he-dogs and every thousand she-dogs two water-dogs are formed, one male and one female. We need not wonder, then, that the correct methods of feeding and breeding dogs are prescribed with all possible solemnity in the Avesta.

Immense
importance
of the dog.

Physical and ceremonial defilements are put on a level with moral offences. Contact with a dead body—especially that of a man or dog—must with all possible care be avoided. To bury, or burn, a corpse is an unpardonable crime. So is it for one man to carry a dead body.

Physical
and cere-
monial
defilements.

The punishments for offences are of various

Punish-
ments.

¹ The otter (?) Possibly the beaver.

² Vand. xiii. 172, 167.

kinds; stripes, fines, imprisonment, and death. They are often capriciously disproportionate to the offence. We hear of five stripes with a horse-whip, and of as many as two hundred. Man-slaughter is visited with ninety stripes; but the man who gives bad food to a dog receives two hundred.

Intricate
legislation
about
women

There is much intricate legislation about the uncleanness of woman in child-birth and at other times; but on this we will not dwell.

A woman in child-birth suffering from fever and thirst is not absolutely debarred from water;—but the penalty of drinking it is two hundred stripes; the reason being that she is unclean and pollutes the holy element. For killing a water-dog the penalty is ten thousand stripes.

Partial
execution
of such
legislation.

Our readers will ask with some curiosity, Was such legislation ever practically carried out? Certainly not in the earlier Persian kingdom; and probably not in all its fulness even under the Sasanian monarchs. The Vandidad supplies us with the priestly ideal of right and wrong—an ideal which we cannot conceive to have ever been completely realized.

CONCLUSION.

It is now time to give a brief statement of the impression left on the mind by the review we have taken of the general teaching of the Avesta.

There are several characteristics which entitle the Zoroastrian faith to a high place among Gentile systems of religion.

1. It ascribes no immoral attributes to the object of worship. Ahura Mazda, the supreme divinity, stands ethically much higher than the popular gods of Pagan nations generally. The Avesta, as we have seen, retains much of nature-worship; but evil qualities are never ascribed either to the physical object or the being who presides over it.

Merits of
Zoroas-
trianism.

2. The Avesta sanctions no immoral acts as a part of worship.

3. None of the prescribed forms of worship is marked by cruelty.

4. In the great contest between light and darkness, the Avesta exhorts the true worshipper not to remain passive, but to contend with all his might against the productions of the Evil Principle.

5. One remarkable characteristic of the system is the absence of image-worship.¹

6. The Avesta never despairs of the future of humanity; it affirms the final victory of good over evil.

In regard to all these points there is a striking difference between Zoroastrianism and Hinduism.

Difference
between
Zoroas-
trianism and
Hinduism.

¹ As has been mentioned above, image-worship was not wholly unknown in ancient Persia. Contact with Hindus led some of the Parsis in India into idolatry; but all the educated agreed in condemning it.

It is not easy to explain how the former system struggled successfully against that fatal gravitation downwards which made primitive Hinduism sink deeper and deeper in the mire; but the fact, at all events, is undeniable.

Other merits
of Zoro-
astrianism.

Assuredly, we have no wish to undervalue the importance of the great characteristics of Zoroastrianism that have now been mentioned; and we might point to yet other merits, such as (7) its encouragement of agriculture, (8) its inculcation of truth in thought, word, and deed, (9) the position of respect it assigns to women, and (10) the kindness towards, at least, Zoroastrians which it inculcates. Still, it must be confessed that the creed of the Avesta is greatly wanting in many essential respects. It is by no means such a faith as enlightened reason can accept or defend.

Its
deficiencies
and errors.
It contains
conflicting
systems of
thought.

1. We have seen that the Avesta contains a mixture of various systems of thought,—a quasi monotheism, dualism, and nature-worship. It has often been mentioned as a characteristic of the Bible that, although its composition extended over more than a thousand years, there is a strict unity of monotheistic belief running through it from Genesis to the Apocalypse. Such a harmony pervades no one portion of the Avesta; each great division contains conflicting elements.

Its theism
very
defective.

But (2) even in its highest representations of divinity the book is deplorably defective. A glance

at what has been said on page 13 will clearly show this. Or take the formal enumeration of the divine attributes contained in the following passage :—

HORMAZD YASHT.

Ver. 5. Zarathustra said, Reveal to me that name of thine, O Ahura Mazda, which is the greatest, the best, the fairest, the most effective, the most fiend-smiting, the best-healing, that destroys best the malice of devas and men ;

Enumeration
of divine
attributes.

6. That I may afflict all devas and men ; that I may afflict all Yatus and Pairikas ; that neither devas nor men may be able to afflict me, neither Yatus nor Pairikas.

7. Ahura Mazda answered him, “My name is the one of whom questions are asked, O holy Zarathustra !

My second name is the giver of herds.

My third name is the strong one.

My fourth name is perfect holiness.

My fifth name is, All good things created by Mazda, the offspring of the holy principle.

My sixth name is understanding.

My seventh name is the one with understanding.

My eighth name is knowledge.

My ninth name is the one with knowledge.

My tenth name is weal.

My eleventh name is he who produces weal.

My twelfth name is Ahura (the Lord).

My thirteenth name is the most beneficent.

My fourteenth name is he in whom there is no harm.

My fifteenth name is the unconquerable.

My sixteenth name is he who makes the true account.

My seventeenth name is the all-seeing.

My eighteenth name is the healer.

My nineteenth name is the Creator.

My twentieth name is Mazda (the knowing one).

9. Worship me, O Zarathustra, by day and by night with offerings of libations well accepted. I will come to thee for help and joy ; I, Ahura Mazda. The good holy Sraosha will come to thee for help and joy. The waters, the plants, and the fravashis of the holy ones will come to thee for help and joy.

Contrast
with
Biblical
conceptions.

How little, after all, do these twenty names convey to satisfy the needs and cravings of the human soul! No idea is hinted of the fatherhood of God. How sublime and melting is that one utterance of the Bible, "God is Love," in comparison with all this laboured and labouring description of Ahura Mazda!

Zoroas-
trianism
inferior to
Sufism.

With respect to the idea of communion with God, not only does Zoroastrianism fall immeasurably below Christianity,—it is decidedly inferior even to Sufism, which is a later production of the Persian mind itself.

No worship
of God
prescribed.

3. With regard to the worship of God. There doubtless were deep meanings connected with the rite of animal sacrifice, as practised by the ancient heroes; but the Avesta does not prescribe it, and, in overlooking animal sacrifice, it certainly parted with truths both venerable and precious. Prayer in the Avesta becomes, as we have seen, very much a magical formula; the sounds of which are all-important, not the sense. No common worship is prescribed,—the worshipper prays for himself, or is prayed for by the priest. That blending of hearts and interests which is implied in the sublime invocation — *Our Father, which art in heaven*—is not known to the Avesta.

Ideas of
offerings to
the gods.

4. The idea which the Avesta has of the offerings presented to the divinities is as low as that of

the Vedas. The divinities generally need food; they are all strengthened by praise.

5. Our readers will remember that Ahura Mazda neither receives nor asks any peculiar homage. He is honoured as almost every object in the good creation is honoured. Although the Avesta never, or scarcely ever, deviates into the pantheism which confounds the Creator with the creation, yet, in so far as worship is concerned, it is chargeable with degrading the Creator to an equality with his own productions.

Degrading
ideas of
God

In this respect there is the strongest possible contrast between the Avesta and the Bible. The latter is strongly, even vehemently, monotheistic; it condemns in the sternest language everything which in any degree trenches on the high intransferable claims of Jehovah. "The Lord, whose name is jealous, is a jealous God." "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." In place of worshipping the works of God, the Bible, by a bold personification and apostrophe, demands that they shall worship God. "Praise Him, sun and moon; praise Him, all ye stars of light!" Instead of being adored, fire is itself commanded to adore (Psalm cxlviii. 3-10). It was not that the seers and poets of Israel had no eye to discern the glory of Nature; they saw it more clearly than Mede or Persian did, and they celebrated it in still loftier strains; but they knew

Contrast
between the
Avesta and
the Bible.

that the glory had no subsistence apart from Him who gave it birth, and Him they could not too exclusively or ardently adore.

Defective
idea of Sin.

6. The notion of Sin in the Avesta is exceedingly imperfect. Evil, as dwelling in the heart, is very seldom mentioned; external pollution is nearly all in all. Hence, such a piercing cry as that of the Psalmist: "Pardon mine iniquity, for it is great," is never heard. Equally unknown is the feeling, akin to rapture, which is expressed in the words of the prophet Micah: "Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity?" We see no sad introspection, no wrestlings of the spirit with inward corruption, no "bitter thoughts of conscience born," no cry of self-despair like this: "Who can understand his errors? Cleanse Thou me from secret faults."

No deep
idea of
expiation.

7. Coincident with this very imperfect sense of human sinfulness is the entire absence of any deep idea of expiation. The great problem of expiation, which receives so sublime a solution in the Cross, has occupied and distressed not a few who never had the light of Judaism or Christianity; but it seems hardly to have suggested itself to the writers of the Avesta. For ordinary faults they prescribe washings, purifications, or penalties; and some extraordinary crimes are pronounced unpardonable.

No idea of
Salvation in
the Avesta.

8. The idea of Salvation does not appear in the Avesta. No contrast can be more complete than

that which exists between its mode of treating sin and the Christian doctrine of the Atonement. Not a few writers who do not accept the fact of the atonement made by Jesus Christ have yet been awed by the sublimity of the conception—the conception of the Son of God becoming the Son of Man, and, by His obedience unto death, bringing sinful man to God; and nothing, surely, could set in a clearer light the essential evil of sin, and also both the divine righteousness and mercy. Even unbelievers have repeatedly confessed that the doctrine of the atonement has a strange power of stirring the deeper and better emotions of the human heart.

The sublimity of the Christian conception of atonement.

9. Again, there is not only the guilt of sin; there are the dreadful consequences of pollution, degradation, and death, entailed on the soul which is surrendered to its power. How shall the dead spirit live, and, as on eagle's wings, soar upward to a holy heaven? Alas! the Avesta knows not of the need of our "escaping the corruption that is in the world through lust," nor of our becoming "partakers of the divine nature" by the direct action of the Spirit of God in regenerating and purifying the heart of fallen man.

Defective idea of spiritual purification.

10. We have seen that the Zoroastrian idea of moral purity was never able to disengage itself from that of ceremonial purity. The Avesta is, in this respect, considerably behind some of the Hindu

Moral and ceremonial purity confounded.

writings, as well as immeasurably below the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. The explanation
 Explanation. seems to be this. A sacerdotal caste will, if unchecked, go on multiplying ceremonies and the externals of religion, until the mind becomes wholly absorbed in what is merely ritual. So, doubtless, it would have been in ancient Judea, had not the prophetic office been established. The prophet, clothed with Divine authority, exclaimed: "Bring no more vain oblations." "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." Words of burning indignation and holy scorn recalled the people to the observance of the weightier matters of the law. But in ancient Persia the laity seem to have left religion entirely to the dictation of the priests. From the reign of Darius, the son of Hystaspes, the Magi slowly regained their power, until it was crushed by the invasion of Alexander; and under the revived empire—the Sasanian—their authority appears to have been almost uncontrolled from the very outset.

Erroneous
 conception
 of the
 divine
 government

11. The Avesta has no conception of that deep principle in the divine administration,—“Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth.” Utterly incomprehensible also to the Zoroastrian would have been the solemn warning which the prophet Amos addresses to the people in the name of God: “You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore will I punish you for your iniquities.”

When calamity came on the people of Ahura Mazda, they believed it must be from the demon or his servants.

The Avesta thus knows nothing of the discipline of sorrow—a principle not wholly unknown to various ancient nations—which, through the influence of the Bible, pervades nearly all modern thought. “Sweet are the uses of adversity:” the principle embodied in these well-known words is recognized by nearly all who are not avowed pessimists. Most educated Parsis will, I think, accept it; but certainly they have not derived this important truth from the Avesta.

The Avesta knows nothing of the discipline of sorrow.

12. The great ideas of self-denial and self-sacrifice find no place in the Avesta.

No self-denial.

13. Many of the rites prescribed in the Avesta are exceedingly childish. Some of them are even disgusting—such as the use of *urina bovis*,—and I have therefore been compelled to pass them hurriedly over.

Many rites are childish, some are disgusting.

14. Intellectually, the Avesta is but a shallow book. Many deep questions, connected with the divine government of the world, which necessarily occur to every reflecting man,—such as those with which the patriarch Job wrestled to agony—seem never to have occupied the Zoroastrian mind.

Intellectually the Avesta is shallow.

15. There is a large amount of verse,—or else, at least, of rhythmical prose—in the Avesta. It may be that the knowledge which now exists of the

sounds of the language does not help us to catch the melody; but certainly it does not seem a captivating music. As for the ideas, they are for the most part drily prosaic. The rich imagination of the early Hindu Rishis has no counterpart in the Avesta: far less have we anything corresponding to the sublimity and seraphic glow of Isaiah and other Hebrew poets.

It contains
no history.

16. The Avesta contains no history. There are brief references in the Yashts to men and women who probably were—in some cases at least—real historic characters; but in no case have we more than a momentary glimpse of the personality. Sunny pictures of old Oriental life—such as abound in the Hebrew Scriptures—there are none. Equally wanting is all that pathos of character and situation of which the Old and New Testaments are full.

It abounds
in false
science.

17. References to the physical world are frequently made; and these, in numberless instances, are directly opposed to scientific facts.

It lacks
spiritual and
moral force.

18. But finally:—Zoroastrianism is deplorably wanting in spiritual and moral force, for this reason among others, that there is so little attractive or elevating in the character and doings of its prophet. We have mentioned that his very existence has been called in question by Orientalists of high name. But supposing him to have actually existed, the mists of time have gathered thick around him. He is a name, a voice, rather than

a man of flesh and blood. Very little can be gleaned from the Avesta regarding him. He is said to have had three wives, three sons, and three daughters; but of his joys and sorrows, his life or death, we know nothing that is fitted to touch the human heart, and awaken either admiration or love. The *Zartosht Nâmah*, which professes to give his history, is a modern compilation abounding in the silliest tales; and the real Zoroaster was probably a greater and better man than his modern followers have made him out to be. Tradition pretty generally holds that he died in battle, fighting by the side of his patron, King Vistâspa.

We do not know the real character of Zoroaster.

How can we compare this shadowy form with Him whose "Name is above every name?" Part of the *Gâthas* may possibly be the composition of Zoroaster himself, or of his earliest followers; and, if so, we should conjecture him to have been a hard-battling man, who laid little claim to inspiration, but honestly disburdened his soul of what he deemed important truth. Various passages seem to indicate a character severe and stern, but strong and earnest; a man not solicitous about ritual observances, and with ideas almost monotheistic. Well, we feel that to dwell on the difference between Zoroaster and Jesus Christ is like contrasting a little rushlight which is doing its feeble best to scatter the darkness, with the unclouded sun, throned in the height of heaven.

Indications of his character.

The
character of
Christ.

What it
teaches.

Its
perfection.

Yet this tract would be incomplete if we did not glance for a moment at the immense superiority of the New Testament over the Avesta, in having the character of Christ depicted in it. Example, it is said, is better than precept. Are then the marvellous truths and precepts, which flowed like beams of light from the lips of Jesus, exemplified in His own life? Thus, we know that one of the new commands He issued, was "love your enemies;" but did He Himself act up to that grand ideal? Hear Him, as His enemies nail Him to the cross, exclaiming—"Father! forgive them; they know not what they do;" and your answer to the question must come in tears rather than in words. If those highest of high moral attainments, self-denial and self-sacrifice for the good of others, are ever to be learned, where can we better learn them than at the cross of Christ? To say that the character of Jesus is faultless is saying little; it is gloriously complete,—it is possessed of every conceivable excellence,—it is "orbed into a perfect star." Even those who do not believe in Christ as the Son of God must admit that, if the Divinity were to become incarnate, the result would be such a career and character as actually belonged to Jesus Christ. The poet reminds us that there are

Truths which wake,
To perish never.

Such are the truths that Jesus uttered; and even

so, there is one example which has become an imperishable part of the highest heritage of humanity, and which must shine on, like the brightness of the firmament, yea, with continually increasing glory, for ever and for ever—the example supplied by the life and death of Christ.

Now, the immense disparity between Christ and Zoroaster is dawning, we believe, on that interesting people, the Parsis of India. They have been clinging to their ancient faith from a feeling of nationality rather than of religion, from tradition more than from conviction; but immense changes are certainly at hand. Of these we cannot now speak. But we believe that, as the “Magi from the east”—who probably were Zoroastrians—hastened to lay their gold, frankincense, and myrrh, at the feet of the new-born Redeemer, so, ere long, the Parsis will in all probability be the first of eastern races, to take upon them, as a race, the easy yoke of Christ.

The difference between Christ and Zoroaster dawning on the Parsis.

EXPLANATORY AND SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES.

a. The Avesta is composed in a language usually called Zend, which is cognate with Sanskrit. The translations from the Avesta in this Tract are generally those of Darmesteter, as given in his version of the *Vandidad* and *Yashts*, forming two volumes of the *Sacred Books of the East*. In other cases Haug or De Harlez has been followed.

b. The Veda is the most ancient of the sacred books of the Hindus.

c. Irân is the general Oriental designation of Persia. The term Iranians includes the Bactrians and Medes as well as the ancient Persians.

d. Ahura Mazda is generally written Hormazd by the Parsis. The usual names of the two principles, as given in the classical writers, are Oromasdes and Arimanes.

e. In Persia the adherents of the Avesta are now reduced to a very small number. In October, 1879, they were only 8499. A few of these were in Teheran, Kashan, Shiraz, and Bushire; and in these towns they were treated fairly well. But the great body of Zoroastrians resides in Yezd and Kirman. They are greatly oppressed by the Mohammedans. They are not allowed to travel, and are forbidden to ride even on asses. The form and colour of their dress are strictly prescribed.—*Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, vol. xxxvi., p. 54.

f. In India, according to the census of 1881, the number of Zoroastrians was 85,397. The far greater part of these are in Western India—chiefly on the island of Bombay.

g. Same Parsis, engaged in commerce, reside temporarily in China. At least, an equal number may be found in England. Some of these are merchants; others are students—of law, medicine, or engineering.



THE AUTHORSHIP

OF THE

FOURTH GOSPEL.

BY
✓
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THE ROMANS," ETC.



THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY:
56, PATERNOSTER ROW; 65, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD; AND
164, PICCADILLY.

Argument of the Tract.

THE concurrent testimony of Christian antiquity, of the sects, the Church and early Fathers, and of the Gospel itself, points to the Johannine authorship. The contents and characteristics of the Book are examined, a comparison between the Gospel and the First Epistle of St. John is instituted, and the conclusion is arrived at that the author of the Gospel must have been a Jew, a Palestinian Christian, a contemporary of Jesus, a member of the intimate circle of His friends, one of His Apostles, the disciple whom Jesus loved, even John, the son of Zebedee.

THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL.¹



I.

IMPORTANCE OF THE SUBJECT.



HERE is a small memoir composed eighteen centuries ago, which, if published separately, would scarcely form The memoir. a brochure of forty or fifty pages. This

little work has been, especially in the last century, the subject of critical study and exegetical commentaries so numerous that they would fill a library.²

Nevertheless, it does not present any particular obscurities. It is a simple recital, written in a clear flowing style, its simplicity sometimes borders Its style. on *naïveté*, and if its contents are deep, they resemble the ocean in this respect, which is transparent even to the bottom in fine weather. This book has been rightly compared to the light of the moon, whose brilliant splendour meets our gaze through the mysterious calm of the night

¹ Written for the Series in French. Translated by Mrs. Kelly.

² See the rough list prepared by M. René Gregory. Clark, Edinburgh, 1875.

The story.

What is it, then—if there be no difficulty of style, nor anything abstract in the character of the subject—which can stimulate, even to this day, the ardour of the critic and the sagacity of interpreters? It is that the story contained in this book is that of a fact which dominates over the whole history; and on the conception we form of the book depends largely our estimate of the fact itself.

What is
Chris-
tianity?

Is Christianity simply, as has been said, “one of the days of humanity,” which has succeeded so many others, and which will in its turn be replaced by others, a halting-place in the indefinite progress of our race? Or is it rather, the last word of the revelations of the eternal God to mankind, the sheet-anchor offered to fallen man by Infinite Love?

The
question one
of life or
death.

That is the question that arises in connexion with this little book, and is the real subject of discussion. We have not here a literary problem that we require to solve, an interesting scientific subject to explain; but a question of life or death which is presented to the world and to every individual in it. If the contents of this book are historically true, we can only bow the knee before Him whose history it contains, and say to Him as Thomas is recorded to have done at the close of it, “My Lord and my God.” If it is only a religious romance, although the most sublime that has ever

been penned, it is not necessary to occupy ourselves with it at this time of day, and the men of the nineteenth century have only to say: We shall look for another. (Matt. xi. 3.)

II.

THE TESTIMONY OF CHRISTIAN ANTIQUITY TO THE JOHANNINE AUTHORSHIP.

CHRISTIAN antiquity has been unanimous in transmitting this book to the Church as the work of a man who was the disciple—nay, more than the disciple—the personal friend of Jesus, John the son of Zebedee, a fisherman on the shores of the Lake of Gennesaret. The Church, as well as the sects most opposed to it, are agreed upon this point.

The testimony of antiquity.

In the second century the Judeo-Christian party, the most hostile to the apostolic spirit, used this narrative as taken from a book whose statements could not be called in question.¹ At the opposite extreme, Marcion, who made special claims to spiritual enlightenment, acknowledges in a letter that he, in common with all the Church, had made use of it up till the moment when he had found in the Epistle to the Galatians a passage which had

The Sects.

¹ The Clementine Homilies. These writings contain four quotations from John perfectly distinct. See Charteris, *Canonicity*, pp. 184, 185.

made him reject the authority (not the authenticity) of this Gospel.¹ We observe the same common acknowledgment in the case of two other parties, equally opposed to each other. The Montanists, a sect of enthusiasts, professing to derive everything in the life of the Church from the immediate teaching of the Holy Spirit, made the promise of the Paraclete in St. John xiv.-xvi. the basis of all their work; and the philosophers, called Gnostics, constructed likewise their theory of the history of the universe from materials borrowed from this Gospel, especially from its prologue.

The Church. Whilst these parties, who separated from the main body of the Church presided over by bishops, all made use of this book as their fulcrum, in spite of their mutual opposition, the Church, which contended with them to the bitter end, and defended itself against their multiplied attacks, never doubted the apostolic origin of this Gospel, which they used against her in quite an opposite sense.

Justin
Martyr.

Justin Martyr, in the middle of the second century, quotes it frequently, as without doubt forming part of the collection of "Apostolic Memoirs," which are read, said he, every Lord's day in all the churches of Christendom, and which he made the basis of his teaching in Rome.²

¹ Tertullian *contra* Marcion.

² See *Charteris*, pp. 176-178.

A little later, an African writer, giving an account of the writings which the churches in his country publicly read as apostolic, designates the Gospel of John as the fourth, and added himself in the words:

The
Muratorian
fragment.

“that which we have seen with our eyes, and heard with our ears, and our hands have handled, declare we unto you ;”—

John declares himself to be not only an eye-witness, but a hearer, and still more a narrator of all the wonderful things concerning the Lord.¹

Irenæus, about the year 180, after having related the origin of the three first Gospels, adds,

Irenæus.

“Then John, the disciple, who rested on the Lord’s bosom, also published his Gospel whilst he remained at Ephesus in Asia.”²

It is remarkable that Irenæus, who wrote at Lyons, in Gaul, came from Asia Minor, where he had spent his young days at Smyrna, under the teaching of Polycarp, who had lived with John himself, and who ought to have thoroughly known all that concerned the book attributed to this apostle.³ What authority and value does such a witness possess !

¹ A fragment, called after Muratori.

² See for numerous other testimonies of this father, *Charteris*, pp. 66–72.

³ See the letter to his friend Florinus, in which he reminds him in such a striking manner of the hours they had passed together at the feet of the venerable bishop, installed by John himself.—Eusebius, *Church History*. v. 20.

New
Testament
writers first
designated
by name in
the end of
the second
century.

The writers of the first half of the second century quote the sacred writings without naming the authors. It was not till later, at the end of the century, when Christian learning began, that they designated the writers of the New Testament by their names. Thus Irenæus is the first who quotes the Epistle to the Romans, naming the author, saying, "Paul, the apostle of Jesus Christ, wrote to the Romans." The same fact occurs again with respect to the fourth Gospel. Although this Gospel is quoted throughout the whole century as of apostolic authority, it is Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, about the year 180, who was the first (after the African author quoted above) to speak of the fourth Gospel as the work of John :—

"It is what the Holy Scriptures, and all inspired men teach us, among whom John says, 'In the beginning was the Word.'"

The apostolic origin of this Gospel was a fact of public notoriety, to which it was not generally necessary to bear especial testimony.

Relation
between the
testimony of
the Church
and that of
the sects.

When we reflect on the relation of the Church to the sects, we ask how, if the fourth Gospel was the product of one of these sects, it could have been universally received by the Church, or how, if it had been composed at a later period in the history of the Church, it could have been so generally received by the sects? There is but one reply to this question, and it is instructive.

This double fact can only be explained on the supposition of the Gospel having been composed and used in the Church before these divers heretical sects sprang up; so that they, while going their separate ways, all carried away the book with them as the patrimony of the family, which they were not willing to give up. This action on their part pre-supposes, not only the high antiquity of this Gospel,—since the separation of these sects took place towards the end of the first century (compare 1 John ii. 19),—but that its existence and authority were recognised before this separation. Now this authority, which the evil use that these sects made of this writing did not shake, could only rest on the conviction of its apostolic origin.

Explanation
of the fact.

This conviction of the Church is declared in a document almost as old as the Gospel itself, the supplementary statement in the twenty-first chapter of the Gospel of John. The Gospel, properly so called, ends with the twentieth chapter, for the verses thirty and thirty-one of that chapter plainly indicate the close of the book. The twenty-first chapter has then been added subsequently, evidently from the oral narrative of the author of the whole book, for in that chapter the method of narration and style are the same as in the rest of the book. The aim of this appendix has been to preserve the three prophecies of the risen Jesus as to the future of His disciples.

The twenty-
first chapter.

The aim of
it.

The pre-
dictions of
the twenty-
first chapter.

The first, about his disciples in general, to whom Jesus predicted, through the miraculous draught of fishes, the most magnificent missionary success; the second, with respect to Peter, to whom He entrusted the direction of the Church, and promised him martyrdom as a compensation for his denial; the third, with regard to John, about whom Jesus said to Peter, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" These last words, which promised at any rate to John a longer life than that of the other apostles, and extending beyond the destruction of Jerusalem, got spread abroad in the Church in an altered form. It was pretended that the Lord had promised John that he should not die till His final return, or in other words, that he should not die at all. In order to rectify this error, the author took care to state clearly the exact meaning of the words of Jesus. When was this appendix drawn up? It must have been at the time when the death of John and the apparent contradiction of this fact with the promise of Jesus occupied the mind of the Church, consequently, immediately after his death, or more probably still, at the time when it was seen approaching. The friends of John wished, by preserving the very words of Jesus, to prevent the contradiction which this event would give to His words, under the form in which they were usually quoted. They drew up, with this idea,

The date of
the chapter.

this appendix, and ended it with this remarkable declaration,—

“This is the disciple (the disciple whom Jesus loved, v. 20, 23) which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things, and we know that his testimony is true.”

These men who knew the author personally, who knew from the relations that they had long had with him, that he was incapable of bearing false witness, declare in the face of the world by publishing this chapter, that its author is none other than the disciple whom Jesus loved, and they know him to be incapable of lying; and they act in this manner while that author is still alive, for that comes out in the different tenses of the two verbs used, “He who *bears* witness of these things,” and “He who *has written* them.” His book is composed, finished, but his oral testimony still lasts. We may add that this twenty-first chapter is not lacking in any document, nor manuscript, nor ancient version of the Gospel. The Gospel has never existed without it, this appendix has always been published with it. It is difficult to imagine a more ancient testimony, nor one more worthy of respect.

The
testimony of
the
publishers.

There is one, however, that outdoes it in antiquity and dignity. In many passages in this book the author designates and points to himself. In chap. i. 14 he speaks of himself as an ocular witness of what he is about to say :—

Testimony
of the
author
himself.

“The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory . . . full of grace and truth.”

The moral
sense
impossible
here.

It has been maintained that every Christian can, in a certain sense,¹ affirm the same thing. Yes, in a certain sense; but this purely moral sense is impossible here, for the Evangelist speaks evidently of the Incarnation, and the earthly life of Jesus, whose history he is about to relate. In such a context it is impossible to use the term *beheld* in a purely spiritual sense. In chapter xix. 35, when the side of Jesus was pierced by the spear, and blood and water flowed from the wound, the Evangelist says:—

“And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true, and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.”

Writers have used and abused the term “*he that*” to maintain that the author was here distinguishing himself from the witness who had seen the fact, and had told him of it. But how could he say of any other man than himself, “He knows that he *saith* true”? One man does not answer for another’s conscience; in the nature of things a man can only answer for himself. The Greek pronoun translated “*he that*” proves nothing to the contrary, but is frequently employed in this Gospel in an exclusive sense, “He, and he alone” (comp. i. 18; v. 39; ix. 37); and in no case to point out a different person. It is the witness of the fact

¹ 2 Cor. iii. 18; 1 John iii. 16.

who is narrating it, it is *he alone* who has seen it, and all others who know the fact only know it by *faith* in his testimony.

“He who hath seen, has borne witness of it, that ye may believe.”

The testimony of the author himself in the capacity of eye-witness is unanswerably confirmed by the passage in his first Epistle (1 John i. 1-4), which so much struck the author of the Muratorian fragment quoted above:—

Confirmation of the testimony in the first Epistle.

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of Life . . . declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.”

It is not possible to express in more forcible terms the fact of personal perception than by means of the different bodily senses,—sight, hearing, touch. Some have supposed that the author wished simply to controvert the heretics who pretended that the body of Jesus was only an appearance; but the affirmation of John would have been of no value to such persons, for these people acknowledged that there had been sensible appearances in the life of Jesus, only they maintain that they were without material reality; and any affirmation of witnesses would not demonstrate to them the contrary. Besides, the first words, “He that was from the beginning,” would have been worse than

The affirm-
ation of the
fact of the
Incarnation.

useless in this sense. That which John affirmed in this introduction of his Epistle was not the reality of the body of Jesus, it was the solemn and fundamental fact of the Incarnation, the dwelling of the Eternal Word in the humanity of Jesus. Life has been manifested, and we have seen it. And again, he who has seen, heard, touched, bears witness, in order that those who have not seen, heard, touched, may believe, and thus possess and rejoice with Him (vers. 3, 4). There is too much holy majesty and tender love in these words to suppose that they were those of an impostor; and if he who wrote them was what he pretended to be, the witness of the life and death of Jesus, it must be admitted that this witness was an Apostle, and that this Apostle was the disciple whom Jesus loved, as has been attested in the twenty-first chapter. For he alone was at the foot of the cross (John xix. 26), and was able to see with his eyes the blood and water flowing from the side of Jesus.

The extent
of their
testimony to
the
authorship
of the fourth
Gospel.

Such are the witnesses who attest the Johannine origin of the fourth Gospel. We do not think that any other ancient book has similar witnesses. They go back to Irenæus, the disciple of Polycarp, the friend of John, through the whole of the second century, to the editors of the writing of which they were the depositories, even to John himself.

The only religious party in the second century,

who appear to have rejected this Gospel, as well as the other writings of John, was a little sect in Asia Minor, of whom Irenæus and Epiphanius speak, and whom the latter called *Aloges*, a name which probably contains a play upon words, this term signifying at the same time, "who denies the Word," and "destitute of reason." These sectaries were compelled to reject the writings of John through their antipathy to the Montanists, who found in these writings a support for their exaltation. But they became, without intending it, witnesses to the general tradition of the Church, by attributing them to the heretic Cerinthus, who had been the adversary of the Apostle John at Ephesus. To make this man the author of these writings was in effect admitting that they had been published in the place, and at the same time as the tradition of the Church placed the composition of this Gospel.

The only
opponents.

III.

CONTENTS OF THE BOOK.

WE will now turn to the book itself as if we had hitherto been strangers to the Christian Church, and as if this book had fallen for the first time into our hands.

In the preamble (vers. 1-18) the author, with great solemnity, impresses on us the gravity and decisive value of the history he is going to narrate

The
prologue
(i. 1-18).

The
substance
of the
prologue.

to us. There is in God an eternal Being like Him, who lives with Him in the most intimate communion, who even shares His divinity, and is the expression of His Essence, as the word is the expression of the thought—different from it, and yet one with it. This Being has been the agent of the creation, He is the principle of Life, and of all that lives, the Light of all who see clearly, and He has Himself appeared in the world to enlighten it. But although every precaution was taken that He might be known at His coming, although He was preceded by a messenger appointed to prepare His way, and although a dwelling was beforehand prepared in the world for Him, this was closed against Him, and “His own received Him not.” Nevertheless the blessing of His coming has not been lost. A band of men were found who recognized in this Being the characteristic signs of the glory of the Most High, of His grace and truth, and who understood that this was none other than “the Word made flesh.” They received Him, and found in Him the plenitude of grace and truth, and the true knowledge of God. By the new birth received in His name, they became the children of God.

This is the substance of this incomparable preamble, which, like the overture in an oratorio, presents all the essential features of the work that is to follow. The three aspects of the history of

Christ, as it is presented to us in this Gospel, answer in fact to the three great thoughts of the prologue: 1st, Jesus manifesting Himself to the world as the Eternal Word; 2nd, a part of mankind shutting their eyes to the light and rejecting it; 3rd, a church of believers, rallying to His call and endued with grace by Him; in three words: Jesus—unbelief—faith. Upon these three thoughts rests, as we shall see, the plan of the whole narrative.

Its correspondence with the aspects of the history.

In the first part (ch. i.-iv.) the first of these three thoughts prevails: Jesus and His revelation as the Son of God. This revelation is made through the testimony of John the Baptist, and by the manifestations of Jesus Himself, in word and deed. We leave to the reader the task of studying the narrative, and applying to it this general idea. We will only add that the fact of this revelation of Jesus does not exclusively occupy this first part; but the two others, faith and unbelief, have also a place in it, although a subsidiary one: the first, in the person of the five disciples whose calling is mentioned in chap. i.; then in that of Nicodemus (chap. iii.), and of the Samaritans (iv.), and even in the narrative of the nobleman's son (chap. iv.), although his faith, as well as that of Nicodemus, was tarnished by religious materialism, by the dependence it placed on miracles; and on the other hand, unbelief

Jesus as Son of God the thought of the first part (i. 19-iv. 54).

Faith and unbelief have a subsidiary place.

begins to manifest itself in the hostile deputation from the Sanhedrim (chap. i.), in the conduct of the authorities at the temple (chap. ii.), in the attitude of the population at Jerusalem, and of the disciples of John the Baptist (chap. iii.), in short, in that of the Galilean people as it is characterized by the words of Jesus,

“ If ye see not signs and miracles, ye will not believe.”

Unbelief
the thought
of the
second part
(v.-xii.).

In the second part (chap. v.-xii.) it is unbelief that prevails. No doubt Jesus continues to manifest Himself, for this fundamental feature remains the root and principle of all the progress of the history, and side by side with unbelief, faith is increasing in His disciples and among others also, such as Nicodemus (chap. vii. 50), the man born blind (ix.), the inhabitants of Bethany (xi.), and a certain number in Jerusalem (vii. 40; x. 42; xii. 11 and 20). But the most striking characteristic of this part of the narrative is the progress of Israelitish unbelief. Its development is manifested on the occasion of the three miracles performed in Judea, viz., the healing of the impotent man (chap. v.), the man born blind (chap. ix.), and the resurrection of Lazarus (chap. xi.), then in a miracle no less striking that took place in Galilee, the multiplication of the loaves of bread (chap. vi.). In the fifth chapter, the design is formed at Jerusalem of putting Jesus to death as a Sabbath-

The progress
of
Israelitish
unbelief.

breaker and a blasphemer (v. 16 and 18). In the sixth chapter, the Galilean faith, which had apparently been so vigorous, withers when Jesus speaks of eating His flesh and drinking His blood in order to be saved (vi. 60-66). In the seventh chapter things come to such a height during the sojourn of Jesus at Jerusalem, that the Sanhedrim takes the first proceedings against Him, and gives its officers orders to seize Him (ver. 32). In the eighth chapter Jesus is obliged to deny to the people of Jerusalem the title of children of Abraham, and to substitute that of the children of the devil (ver. 39-41). The first attempt to stone Him is made (ver. 59). In the ninth chapter we find that every follower of Jesus had been excommunicated from the synagogue (ver. 22), and we see the hatred and jealousy of the heads of the people burst forth. In the tenth chapter a still more serious attempt is made to stone Him, which Jesus checks with these words:

The
withering of
Galilean
faith.

Christ's
followers
excommuni-
cated.

“Many good works have I showed you from my Father, for which of these works do ye stone Me?” (vers. 31, 32)

In chapter eleven, the third good work, the raising of Lazarus, causes the hatred of the Sanhedrim to blaze forth upon Him, and leads to the decision being formed of putting Jesus to death as soon as possible (ver. 53). The first step is taken for carrying out this project. He is publicly denounced as one worthy of death. The twelfth

The raising
of Lazarus
and the
hatred of
the
Sanhedrim.

chapter completes the development of unbelief. He who is to play the part of the traitor reveals himself when Mary anoints the feet of Jesus (ch. xii. 4, 5). Then at the close of the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, the chief priests understand that there is no more room for delay; Jesus, on His part, leaves the temple, saying to the people :

“ Yet a little while the light is with you ” (v. 19-35).

Here the narrator comes to a pause :

“ He departed, and did hide Himself from them ; ”

Retrospec-
tive view
of the
culmination
of unbelief.

that is to say, He did not reappear in the temple. The narrative at this point of tragical importance is followed by a retrospective *coup d'œil* upon the fact of the national unbelief now fully matured. Such a result is so astonishing that it must be looked at as a divine dispensation. A judicial hardening fell upon Israel, that is why, in spite of such miracles and striking testimonies, (which the author resumes in ver. 44-50), Israel held out and remained in unbelief to the end. This conclusion leaves no doubt as to the thought that predominates in this second part, viz., the development of the national unbelief, hastened on by each great act of the public ministry of Jesus.

Third part
(xiii.-xvii.)
The
development
of faith.

The third part (ch. xiii.-xvii.) is devoted to the delineation of the third fact—the development of faith. In the intimate circle of those who were

depositories of the faith, Jesus more fully manifests Himself, first, by an act fitted to dispel all carnal Messianic hopes, the washing of the disciples' feet; then by a series of instructions which arise from questions put to Him by four of His disciples; and lastly, in His leave-taking of them. He shows them what will be their mission in the world, to renew it by His life working in them, He foretells to them the enmity they would encounter, but also promises them the help of His Spirit, which will make them courageous witnesses for Him. This part also ends with an incident which clearly marks the close. The disciples, as if dazzled by the light that had been shown them, exclaim—

Fuller self-manifestation of Jesus.

“ Now are we sure that Thou knowest all things . . . We believe that Thou camest forth from God.”

Jesus then gives thanks for their faith, although He knows the weakness of it, and in a final prayer commends His person, His disciples, His work to the Father, whose will He has accomplished in this world. This prayer (ch. xvii.), which has been called the priestly prayer, is the act by which the great High Priest of humanity presents to God as His offering, the fruit of His travail, the faith kindled in the hearts of the eleven as an earnest of the future faith of mankind. The traitor among the apostles had, in the course of the evening, left the room in which the passover-

His great High-priestly prayer.

supper was eaten. He shows in this part the subsidiary element of unbelief, as the disciples in the previous part had represented that of faith.

Fourth part
(xviii., xix.)

The consum-
mation
of unbelief.

In the fourth part (ch. xviii. and xix.), which contains the account of the Passion, is described the *consummation of unbelief*, always roused into action by the holy manifestations of Jesus, and leaving room also for the element of faith. The arrest of Jesus in Gethsemane, where unbelief and hardness of heart culminate in the kiss of the traitor Judas; the appearance of Jesus before Annas, with the denial of Peter; His being brought before Pilate, where His accusers display the most consummate guile, and where Jesus made His judge tremble; the scene of the Crucifixion, during which those tender words were addressed to the disciple whom Jesus loved: "Behold thy mother," and then, "Behold thy Son"; then the breaking of the legs of the malefactors, while those of Jesus were untouched; then the mysterious signs, the piercing of the spear, and the flow of blood and water; then the burial, at which the first gleam of the divine triumph lightens this sorrowful scene: all these things show us the outward victory of unbelief, the result of the events recorded in the second part.

Fifth part
(xx. 1-29).

The fifth part (ch. xx.) is connected exactly in the same way with the third; it is the consummation of the disciples' faith through the

resurrection of Christ, first in the cases of Peter and John, to whom the appearance of the sepulchre presenting no trace of a violent removal became a revelation, then of Mary Magdalene, and in the evening of the day, of all the disciples, to whom Jesus granted a foretaste, as it were, of the day of Pentecost; and lastly, the supreme victory of faith in Thomas, the most refractory of the eleven, who, the moment his unbelief was conquered, attains at a bound to the perception of the full height of the object of faith, in this exclamation, "My Lord and my God." This cry of adoration is the close of the narrative, it is in evident keeping with the first words of the book:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God."

What perfect consistency and unity run through the whole narrative! It is truly a great whole. We feel that we possess the result of the most intense contemplation and of the deepest meditation. One sentence is added after this exclamation of Thomas. It gives us a glance at the future development of the Church that shall be born from the apostolic testimony:

"Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

Corresponding to the prologue is a short conclusion (xx. 30, 31). The author in it explains the method and object of his narrative. He did not intend to relate all he knew of the history of Jesus,

The consummation of faith.

Conclusion
(xx. 30, 31).

The object
of the writer
of the
Gospel.

for He had performed a number of other miracles in the presence of His disciples, "which are not written in this book." This expression, especially in Greek, leads us to suppose that these things are contained in other books, otherwise how could the author of this one pass them over in silence; and why did he explain himself by saying in *this* book? Concerning his object, he has selected from the whole of the facts those which he deemed most appropriate to produce in his readers the same faith which he had derived from witnessing the events, that is, that Jesus is the Messiah promised to the Jews, and the Son of God given to the world. It is in this faith that he had found eternal life, and he desired that his readers might find it also. (On the appendix, chap. xxi., see above.)

IV.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NARRATIVE.

Three
contrasts.

THE greatness of a man is shown by the contrasts that appear in his character; it is the same thing with books, and judged only from this point of view, the fourth Gospel ought to appear to us as a most remarkable work. It presents, indeed, three remarkable contrasts.

First
contrast.
The completeness
of the
framework.

The first contrast relates to the plan of the narrative. On the one hand, the framework of it is much more *complete* than that of the three other

Gospels; and on the other, the narrative has an extraordinarily fragmentary character. To read the three Synoptic¹ Gospels superficially, one would think that the public ministry of Jesus lasted no longer than one year. For no journey to the feasts at Jerusalem is mentioned between the baptism of Jesus and the Easter when He was crucified. We see, on the contrary, from St. John's account, that the public life of Jesus must have lasted at least two years and a half, for between the baptism and the first passover feast, mentioned in ch. ii. 13, a certain time elapsed which may be calculated at some months. In the sixth chapter a second passover is mentioned, and again at the thirteenth chapter, the third and last. This makes the time about two years and a half; and, in fact, such a time was not too long for the earthly work of Jesus. It was but a very short time in which to accomplish the spiritual training of His apostles, and to prepare them for founding the kingdom of God. And the progress of hatred which culminated in the final catastrophe could only have taken place in a period such as that. In studying more closely the Synoptical Gospels themselves, we find a confirmation of this result. The incident related in the sixth chapter (first and following verses) of

The
frag-
mentariness
of the
narrative.

¹ The three Gospels are thus designated in one word—synoptic—because of the almost parallel order of the three accounts,

St. Luke, and in the parallel passages of St. Matthew and St. Mark, supposes a spring time, and consequently a passover feast passed by Jesus in Galilee, long before the passover at which He was put to death. This spring ought, according to all the surroundings of the situation, to correspond with the sixth of St. John, and the events which preceded in the Synoptics suppose one year of Messianic activity.

What the narrative assumes.

And nevertheless how broken and *fragmentary* is the narrative of John. It assumes a multitude of facts to be known, which have not been related. For instance, the ministry of John the Baptist, and the baptism of Jesus (chap. i. 19), the two personages, Andrew and Peter (ver. 41, and foll.), the mother of Jesus (chap. ii. 1), His first home at Nazareth (chap. ii. 12), the election of the twelve apostles (chap. vi. 70), are spoken of absolutely as if the reader were acquainted with all the details. Much more, the narrative though continuous in a certain respect, contains several surprising gaps. The second return of Jesus to Galilee (chap. iv.) must have happened in the month of December (v. 35); the fifth chapter brings us, according to all probability, to the feast of Purim, in the month of March of the following year: between these two facts, there are three months which the author passes over in complete silence. Between chapters five and six,

Gaps in the narrative.

a month (month of April), of which he says not one word. Between chap. vi. (Easter) and vii. (Feast of Tabernacles, end of September), seven months, of which we only know what we are told in the first verse of the seventh chapter :

“After these things Jesus walked in Galilee, for He would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill Him.”

Between this feast and that of the dedication (chap. x. 22), which took place at the end of December, again three months without any record of events, and from this time till the following passover, only one single event—the raising of Lazarus—is related in detail. There are seventeen months in all out of two years and a half, of which we only know some isolated days ; and if we add the nine months which must have elapsed between His sojourn at Jerusalem at the first passover (chap. ii. 13) and the return to Galilee (chap. iv. 1), that makes no less than twenty-six months out of thirty of which the narrative gives us no account.

Gives no account of twenty-six months out of thirty.

This is indeed a strange method of relating a history ! This mode of narration is followed in a number of particular cases. Whilst omitting almost entirely the accounts of the Galilean ministry, the author relates in detail five sojourns at Jerusalem (ii. 5 ; v. 1 ; vii.-x. 21 ; x. 22, and foll. ; xii.-xix.). Whilst relating the first calling of the disciples in Judea (chap. i.), he omits the

second at the Lake of Gennesaret. Whilst describing the washing of the disciples' feet (chap. xiii.) at the last supper, he omits the institution of the Lord's Supper. He relates the examination before Annas (xviii. 13), but does not say a word about the solemn appearance before Caiaphas, when Jesus was condemned to death by the Sanhedrim (although he does not forget to mention the place where it was held), compare xviii. 24, and the word *first*, v. 13.

The method
pre-supposes
other
narratives.

Such a method of relating a history can only be explained by the author having before him other narratives which were circulating in the Church, in which all the facts omitted by him were mentioned. This is, no doubt, the meaning of the words, "in *this* book" (chap. xx. 30), as we have already indicated.

Second
contrast:
The style.

A second striking contrast is to be remarked in the *style* of this book. The Greek is pure, and free from all Hebraisms. And nevertheless one feels that the thoughts of the author are entirely Jewish. All is intuitive, as among the Semitic race; nothing dialectic, as among the Greeks. The variety of Greek particles is wanting, one only meets with *and* and *then*. The parallelisms, which characterise the Hebrew poetry, appear as soon as the sentiment rises. "No language," says Ewald, "can, as to the spirit and inspiration of it, be more Hebrew than that of our author."

In this style, which has not its equal in any sacred or profane literature, the clothing is Greek, but the body is Hebrew.

A third contrast, more important still, is felt in the *spirit* of the book. On the one hand, the author shows that he is quite freed from all legal forms.

Third
contrast:
The spirit.

“The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem worship the Father . . . but the true worshippers shall worship Him in spirit and in truth.” (Chap. iv. 21-24.)

The privileges of the Jew are abolished, and from all people shall be gathered sheep, who shall be one fold, under one Shepherd (x. 16). No more works of the law; the only work God demands is faith (vi. 28, 29). All salvation consists in dwelling in Christ, eating His flesh, and drinking His blood spiritually (vi. 56-63). And on the other hand, what a living relation to the old covenant! Israel, the dwelling-place of Jesus, prepared long before His coming (i. 11). The temple of Jerusalem is the house of His Father, into which He enters and acts as His Son (ii. 16). To believe in Moses is to believe in Him, and to reject Him is to reject Moses (v. 46, 47). Salvation is of the Jews (iv. 22). Jesus Himself is the Messiah promised to them, the true brazen serpent, the true manna, the true Rock whence springs the living water, the true Cloud in the wilderness, the Joy of

Abraham, the Shepherd of Israel, the King promised who should come in the name of the Lord, the Adonai whom Isaiah beheld, the true Paschal Lamb, Jehovah pierced by His people.¹ All the living roots in the thoughts of the author are planted in the soil of the Old Testament. Here is a heart and a mind formed in the school of Him, who, by His coming, had at the same time fulfilled and abolished the old covenant. John at once lives in the old economy, and soars above it, as Jesus had done.

V.

THE AUTHOR OF THIS BOOK.

Objections
against the
Apostle's
authorship.
First ob-
jection: the
philos-
ophical
character.

WE now ask who is the *man* who could have written such a book, in which are united and resolved into perfect harmony the most striking spiritual contrasts which it is possible to conceive? Let us forget for a moment the unanimous tradition of the Church, and open the book itself. At the first word the critic meets us and says: "It is not possible that an Apostle of Jesus should have called his Master 'The Word,' for you have here a speculative idea and a philosophical expression which do not harmonize with the spirit and language of a Galilean fisherman; such a man would simply have related his history, with-

¹ John i. 46; iii. 14; vi. 32; vii. 37; viii. 12, 56; x. 1, etc.; xii. 13, 41; xix. 36, 37.

out heading his narrative with a metaphysical idea." But the most simple historian is entitled to put at the beginning of his narrative an idea, if he believes that that idea is realized in the fact that he is about to narrate, and that that idea expresses the essence of it. Now, we cannot doubt that in the mind of the author of this Gospel, the incarnation of the Divine Word is a fact as truly historical and real as all the particular events he is about to relate. When Matthew and Mark commence their narratives by inscribing at the beginning, the one the title of *Messiah*, the other, that of *the Son of God*, they write neither more nor less history than St. John does, when he calls Jesus the Word.

But again, from what source has a disciple of Jesus derived this notion and this term? The Jew Philo made use of it at that time to designate the Mediator between an infinite God and a finite world, who was to prevent the defilement of the Supreme Being by the contact with the material world. Can it be supposed that John, the Apostle, became a disciple of the Jewish philosopher at Alexandria? Assuredly not, we reply; and this is not necessary to explain why he uses the term "the Word" as applied to his Master. It was enough for him, 1st, to have listened to the teaching of Jesus, 2nd, to have read and studied the Old Testament, and 3rd, to know the manner

Philo's use
of the term
"The
Word."

Why the
Apostle used
it.

in which this book was explained even in his time in Palestine.

1. *The teaching of Jesus.*—He had heard his Master say :—

What the author had heard his Master say of Himself.

“What, and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?” (vi. 62.)

And these words had revealed Jesus to him as a Being who had existed before His birth into this world. On another occasion he had heard the most startling words from His lips :—

“Before Abraham was, I AM” (viii. 58);

and from this contrast between the *came to be* of Abraham, and the *I am* of Jesus, he must have concluded the eternal existence of the latter. He had heard Jesus praying and saying :—

“Glorify Me, O Father, with Thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was” (xvii. 5);

and a moment after he had heard Jesus add these words :—

“That they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me : or Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world” (xvii. 24);

How the author understood the words of Jesus.

and he had understood them to mean that this existence of Jesus was not only anterior to His birth into this world or to the life of Abraham, but to the origin of the world and time, that it was not only eternal but glorious; nay more, it was the existence of a Being who was the object of the

love of the Father, and who enjoyed Divine communion with Him.

After such testimony, confirmed by daily contact with Jesus, we can understand how he recognized Him to be a Divine Being, and that he needed to find a term that would express the Divine side of His nature.

2. *The teaching of the Old Testament.*—Genesis and Exodus frequently speak of a Person, distinct from God and yet one with Him, who appeared when God desired to manifest Himself to the eyes of men; these books call him, “The angel, or *the sent*, of the Lord.” In Exodus, God says of this being, “My name¹ is in Him” (xxiii. 21); and in the histories in which He plays a part, His name alternates with that of the Lord Himself. In Isaiah He is called “The angel of His presence” (lxiii. 9), and in Malachi (iii. 1), “The angel of the covenant.” In this latter passage He is also called *Adonai*, *Lord*, a title which belongs to God. Beside this mysterious Being, the Old Testament continually speaks of the word of the Lord, whom God sends to the earth to execute His commands, to create and to destroy, to kill and to make alive.² It was by this word that God made the world. (Genesis i.)

The testimony of the Old Testament. A person distinct from and yet one with God.

It was only necessary to put these two ideas

¹ That is to say, the full revelation of My essence.

² Isa. lv. 10, 11; Psa. xxxiii. 6.; cvii. 20, etc.

together to arrive at the conclusion that there was a Being, *Divine* like the word of God, and *personal* like the angel of the Lord, and thus to derive from the Old Testament the premises of the idea announced in the preamble of John's Gospel. The Jewish doctors had done this before the Apostle.

3. *The rabbinical explanation.* — Even before Jesus Christ came, the doctors of the law had taken account of what we have just said; and in the paraphrases which they gave (in contemporary language) of the Old Testament, they had been in the habit of substituting for the name of God, whenever they represented Him as doing anything in the world, the expression *The Word of the Lord* (*Mémar* or *Memra di Jehova*). In the passage in the Old Testament, "God said to the young lad" (Ishmael), Gen. xxi. 20, the rabbinical paraphrase was "The Word of Jehovah" was with. . . Where Jacob said (Gen. xxviii. 21), "The Lord shall be my God," the paraphrase ran "The Word of the Lord shall be my God," and the same throughout the Old Testament. The name "Word" then was employed in Palestine before John wrote, to designate the Divine Being by whom God manifested Himself to the finite world. We also find this expression used in the Apocalypse, the author of which has certainly never been to the school of Philo, and who gives to the glorified Jesus this same name, "*The Word of God*" (xix. 13)

The paraphrase of the doctors of the law.

The use of the name "Word" in Palestine before John wrote.

We find St. Paul also using the same idea, without using the same word, in the passage (1 Cor. x. 9) where he speaks of the appearance of Jehovah in the cloud in the wilderness by this name, *The Christ*. John himself, in chap. xii. 41, declares that the Adonai whose glory Isaiah saw (chap. vi.), was no other than the Christ who afterwards appeared as Jesus. We see how familiar this idea was to the Jews at this time. John only applied it, as well as the term which expressed it, to the Divine Being, whom he acknowledged as his Master.

Philo was a Jewish thinker, who, having set out with the teaching of the Old Testament, had gone over to the Greek philosophy and attempted to combine them. John also had the same beginning, but passed into the school of Christ, and made use of the notions and terms employed in the Old Testament to convey to his readers and to the Church what he beheld in the person of his new Master, and what he had heard from His lips. That is the very simple explanation of the resemblance and the difference between these two writers; it is not necessary to send the apostle to the sage of Alexandria to account for it.

Philo and
John.

It is not difficult either to understand, how, that finding himself at Ephesus, in the great intellectual centre where Asiatic and Greek thought met, John made use of this term "The Word,"

an expression of philosophical import. It is as if he wished to say to these thinkers around him, "This knowledge of God which you are seeking for in your high speculations, we Christians possess in the person of Christ, whom we preach unto you, and who is the revelation of God, as a man's word is the revelation of his thought."

Second
objection:
difference
of the
narrative
from that
of the
Synoptics.

Their
harmony.

A second class of objections against the origin of this Gospel is drawn from the so-called irreconcilable differences which this narrative presents to the other three. The most considerable of all is certainly that which relates to the principal scene of the ministry of Jesus; according to the Synoptics—Galilee; according to John—Jerusalem and Judea. But as we have already seen, there is abundant room in the narrative of John (in the three months that divide the fourth and fifth chapter, in the month that separate the fifth and sixth, in the seven months that intervene between the sixth and seventh, and lastly, in the three that separate the first part of the tenth chapter from the last), to place all the materials of the Galilean ministry contained in the Synoptics. And as to the journeys to Jerusalem, described by John, and omitted, with the exception of the last, by the other evangelists, not only are they necessary to the comprehension of the final catastrophe, which without them would not have been prepared, but they are confirmed by a number of incidents related

The
Synoptics
confirm the
fourth
Gospel.

in the Synoptical Gospels, such as the intimate relation with the family at Bethany, which comes out in the visit related by St. Luke (x. 38-42),—we know, in fact, that Bethany is situated about half-a-league from Jerusalem;—also the relations that Jesus must have had with the master of the ass, and the owner of the house where he had His last supper (Luke xix. 30, 31; xxii. 8-12); but especially these words :

“ Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *how often* would I have gathered thee as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings ” (Luke xiii. 34; Matt. xxiii. 37),

related by the Synoptics, certainly prove that Jesus had been at Jerusalem many times before His last visit. John thus does not contradict the Synoptics on this point; according to their own showing, he completes them. And it is the same in all the other cases where he seems to differ from them. Take, for instance, the first calling of the disciples (placed by John in Judea; in Galilee by the Synoptics), or even the purification of the temple (placed by him at the *first* passover; at the *last* by the others), or the place assigned to the anointing of Mary (placed by Matthew and Mark some days later than by John), or lastly, the difference relative to the evening of the last Supper (according to John the eve of the Paschal supper, and, in appearance at least, by the Synoptics, the very evening of the Paschal feast). In all these cases

St. John
completes
the
Synoptics.

it is more and more acknowledged, either that the two narratives are the complement of each other, or that the historic truth, dimly presented by the Synoptics, emerges into full daylight in John's narrative. The cause of this relation between them is easy to understand: the first of these two accounts was written from oral tradition, as the resemblance (often literal) of the three Gospels proves; while John, as an eye-witness, has written, directly, from personal reminiscences, bearing in mind the traditions in order to complete them, and only omitting what had been sufficiently and accurately reported.

Third
objection:
difference
of the
discourses
from those
of the
Synoptics,
and their
resemblance
to those
of the
Baptist and
of John
himself.

But the chief attack has been made by adversaries on the mode of our Saviour's teaching, presented by St. John, both in its contents and in its form.

We no longer find in it the short and striking maxims, which lent such a popular character to the discourses of Jesus in the Synoptics, and which enter into all the domains of moral life, those "gems of parables" in particular, which leave such an ineffaceable remembrance. There are, in the fourth Gospel, as critics, who deny its authenticity, declare, long pretentious, monotonous, abstract tirades, full of mystical metaphysics, only speaking of Jesus Himself, and His obscure relations to God, and outside of all relation to practical life, and, above all, the doctrine of the pre-existence

of Jesus, which makes a truly human life an impossibility to Him, and substitutes for the heart of man a Logos immoveable and impassable.

As to the style, they further object, that the manner in which the author makes Jesus speak is doubly suspicious; first, because his language has nothing in common with that of the Synoptical discourses, and then there is too much resemblance to the style of the author himself in the prologue and in his Epistles, as well as that which he attributes to John the Baptist in the Gospel.

We do not reply, as has often been done, by pretending that it was by no means impossible that an Apostle should make Jesus speak according to his own fancy, whether in substance or in form. No,—we cannot believe that any one of those who had called Jesus “Master,” who had been struck by the holiness of His person and speech, could have acted in so disrespectful a manner to Him, nor would they have done with respect to His teaching, what Plato, for example, did with respect to that of Socrates. No doubt the words of Jesus suffered in passing through the pen of John, a double transformation. First, as to language, Jesus spoke Aramaic, a language allied to Hebrew, but essentially different to Greek, in which our Gospel is written, and it is natural that in the process of translation, the language of John could not fail more or less to leave its mark upon that of Jesus.

Reply to
third
objection.

The effect of
translation.

John had
not a written
text to
translate
from.

Take the same work, translated by two different persons, who are both authors on their own account, and will you not see that the style of each translation takes the colour of the other works of each author? But there is more: John did not translate a written text, neither did he reproduce, as the Synoptists did, an oral tradition strongly formulated, and in some sort stereotyped. The discourses which he related were written only in his heart, where they were the subject of meditation and continual elaboration. Half a century had nearly elapsed after he had heard them, when he reproduced them in a new language, after having assimilated them spiritually. Under such conditions, it assuredly became very difficult to discern what belonged to the language of Jesus and what to that of John; and we need not be astonished beyond measure, either at the difference of form between the discourses of the fourth Gospel, and those of the other Evangelists on the one hand, or at their resemblance to the other writings of the Apostle, on the other.

Specimen of
Johannine
style in the
Synoptics.

But, happily, we have in the Synoptic Gospels a remarkable specimen of the language habitually used by Jesus in the Gospel of John. We find it in the words in which Jesus expresses the joy that He felt when the seventy returned from their mission, and gave Him an account of their success. Jesus exclaimed:

“I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes : even so, Father ; for so it seemed good in Thy sight. All things are delivered unto Me of My Father ; and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father, and who the Father is, but the Son, and He to whom the Son will reveal Him” (Luke x. 21, 22 ; Matt. xi. 25-27).

Who in reading this passage would not think he had before him the words of the Gospel of John ?

“The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand” (John iii. 35).

“No man hath seen God at any time ; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him” (John i. 18).

“For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind” (John ix. 39).

What close relation both in idea and form there is in these words of John to those which we have just quoted from the Synoptics ! Some one has called this passage from Matthew and Luke, an erratic Johannine block that has strayed into the Synoptic soil. What is the bearing of this significant fact ? Assuredly if a block of granite exists anywhere, there must be neighbouring hills of a homogeneous formation. Thus these words so essentially Johannine in the midst of the Synoptic narrative, prove to us that the kind of language we find in John, is not a creation of his fancy, but that it had its real place in the teaching of our Lord. Perhaps it was necessary, in order that the words of Jesus should take this elevated and

Bearing of
the fact.

sublime strain, which has been called mystic, and which is nothing more than a filial accent in its most perfect form, that a particular emotion should fill his heart, as in the case which we have quoted. Such moments were perhaps exceptional in his life, and in order to apprehend and reproduce them a witness specially prepared was necessary. Every one, even among the apostles, was not capable of following Jesus to such heights as these. If this be the case, then we can understand why the disciple whom Jesus loved was chosen for this rôle, and why he preserved with particular care any such words.

Two modes
of teaching
adopted by
Jesus.

Jesus has Himself characterized the two different modes of teaching which He employed.

“If,” said He to Nicodemus, “I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?” (iii. 12.)

Then he adds,—

“No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven.”

There were times then, when He spake to the inhabitants of the earth, the things of earth; these were His moral discourses, like the Sermon on the Mount, where He described the duty of justice, self-renunciation and humility and true piety, all that referred to the relation of man to man and to God. But there were other times when He spoke to the world as coming from heaven, and

as revealing the things of heaven. Then disclosing to mankind the consciousness of His Sonship, He unveiled something of that paternal and filial relation, and tried to make the world understand something of the nature of the Father's gift in sending them His Son, and through His Son, eternal life. It was such words as these especially that John had received into his inmost being, on which he had long meditated, which he sought to reproduce in the nine or ten discourses of Jesus, which he has preserved to us as the most sublime he had heard during the two years and a half that he had passed with Him. He has thus supplemented the other evangelists with respect to the teaching of Jesus, as we have already seen he did with the history.

John
receptive of
of the
heavenly
kind.

But here a grave question arises about this reproduction of the discourses of our Lord in a foreign language, after the lapse of so many years. Might not John have allowed his own ideas to have penetrated into his writing rather than what he remembered of the words of Jesus? Could he always successfully guard himself from such infiltrations, and can we read the discourses contained in his Gospel with the certainty that it is Jesus who speaks, and not the author? To those who believe in the authenticity of this Gospel, and who know consequently that its author was among those to whom Jesus gave this promise,—

The exact
preservation
of the Lord's
discourses in
the fourth
Gospel.

"I will send you the Comforter, even the Spirit of truth, He will guide you into all truth : for He shall not speak of Himself ; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak ; and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me : for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you" (John xvi. 13, 14 ; xiv. 26),—

Argument
from
inspiration
inadmissible
in this
discussion.

the answer is in this very promise. But face to face with this criticism, we are not allowed to suppose what is in question, and we must examine the objection apart from inspiration.

John puts
the term
" Word "
nowhere
into the
mouth of
Jesus.

The first fact that strikes us is that this term *Word*, which is inscribed at the beginning of the prologue, which plays such a great part in it, which consequently contained in it all that John felt and conceived of the person of Jesus, is nowhere put by him into the mouth of the Lord. And yet he had ample opportunity of doing so, particularly when he relates in the tenth chapter the reply of Jesus to those who were about to stone Him because He made Himself God—

" Is it not written in your law, I said ye are gods ?" (v. 34.)

(it is thus the Psalmist addressed the Israelite judges, as organs of divine justice),

" If then," added Jesus, " the law calls them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken ; say ye of Him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest ; because I said, I am the Son of God ?" (v. 35, 36.)

One would expect to hear after the words *say ye*

of *Him*, these: "Who is the Word itself;" but Jesus only adds—

"Whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world."

The Evangelist has not here yielded to the temptation to put into the mouth of Jesus his favourite expression, even when the connexion of the discourse would naturally have led him to do so. This reserve is so much the more remarkable as the name Word given to Jesus is found not only in the prologue of the Gospel, but also in the two other works of this author, in the first Epistle (i. 1), and in the Apocalypse (xix. 13).

We find in the prologue of the Gospel a still more important idea, which is expressed in such a way as to show us clearly what an important place it had in the mind of our author. It is that of the creation and preservation of all things by the Word. It would have been very easy for him to have put this idea into the mouth of Jesus, and that in many places, but especially in that passage of His intercessory prayer, where our Lord says to His Father:

Nor the idea
of creation
and pre-
servation
by the
Word.

"Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world" (John xvii. 24).

But the author refrained from doing it. The expression, "*to be born of God*," is found in the

Nor the expression "to be born of God."

He thus distinguishes between the thoughts of Jesus and his own.

Three objections from the interview with Nicodemus.

prologue, and occurs nine or ten times in the First Epistle of St. John. It was then very familiar to our author, yet nevertheless we do not meet with it once in the discourses of Jesus, not even in His conversation with Nicodemus, where it would have come in so naturally when He was speaking of "being born of water and of the Spirit" (ch. iii. 5). We see then with what delicacy our author ever respects the line of demarcation between the thoughts of Jesus and his own, and even between the expressions of Jesus and his own.

Three examples are often cited to prove that this Evangelist did not always manifest a similar reserve. The first is at the close of the interview with Nicodemus (ch. iii. from ver. 16), where it is pretended that he puts his own reflections into the mouth of Jesus, and that all this moral judgment wrought in the world by the Gospel has no natural place in this discourse. But, as Jesus had at the commencement of it put the new birth in opposition to the works of the law, the Messianic revelation to the old, then the elevation of Christ on the cross to His elevation on a throne, he closes by showing the contrast between the judgment or spiritual sifting which the Gospel effects, to the judgment which the Pharisees dreamed of, assigning salvation to the Jews and damnation to the heathen. It was thus that Jesus opposed His own

to the Pharisaic programme along the whole line, in His conversation with Nicodemus. We must then not detach this last passage from the rest of the conversation to which it belongs organically.

The discourse which John puts into the mouth of John the Baptist in the third chapter, from the twenty-seventh verse, in reply to the jealous reproaches of his disciples about the conduct of Jesus, is also quoted. The Evangelist, they say, makes the forerunner speak exactly in the same way as the Lord, and both speak absolutely like himself in the prologue and in the Epistle. But they forget that when the Baptist said, "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand," he only reproduces the words of God at the baptism of Jesus, at which he had taken part: "Thou art My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." They also forget that the resemblance between this discourse of the forerunner and the words of Jesus to Nicodemus (chap. iii. 1-21) is explained by the Baptist himself, when comparing himself to the friend of the bridegroom, he adds that he had heard the Bridegroom's voice, and his heart had leapt for joy (ver. 29). We may therefore conclude that the words of Jesus had been reported to him, and that they made his joy perfect. Let us not disregard the inimitable originality of the central words of this discourse of John: "He must increase, but

Objection
from the
discourse
attributed
to John the
Baptist.
John iii.

I must decrease" (ver. 30), for surely no one could have invented those words. It is the forerunner who thus spake, it is the theme of his entire discourse.

Objection
from the
retrospect
of the
development
of Jewish
unbelief.

As to the third example that is usually quoted,—the discourse which ends the retrospective *coup d'œil* of the development of Jewish unbelief (xii. 44–50), it is evident that this is not the report of a special discourse. Had he not just said that "Jesus went away, and hid Himself from them"? How after that could He have made Jesus speak again to them? As he recapitulates in the thirty-seventh verse all the miracles of Jesus, he gives from verses forty-four to fifty a *summary* of all His teaching, in order to show what terrible responsibility rested on the people that had rejected Him, Who had spoken and acted in such a manner.

Comparison
of the
Lord's dis-
courses with
the first
Epistle.

We have now verified the difference that may be observed between the prologue and the discourses of the Gospel. We arrive at an analogous result by comparing these same discourses with the First Epistle. It is easy to convince ourselves that if the same spirit reigns in both these, it is not the same thought that has dictated these two kinds of composition. The author of the Epistle often recurs to the idea of *expiation*.

"Christ is the propitiation for our sins, and also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John ii. 2, and elsewhere).

Well! This truth, which had been clearly revealed to this Apostle only after the death of

Jesus on the cross, does not come out explicitly in the discourses of the Gospel, which proves that he did not compose them at a later period and in his own style. The advent of the *Anti-Christ*, which plays such an important part in the Epistle, is entirely omitted in the discourses of Jesus in the Gospel. He there foretells persecutions, but does not say a word about this supreme and powerful seduction. It is the same with the *false teachers*, against whom John warns us in his Epistle. He might have made Jesus announce them in the Gospel, but he does nothing of the sort. He frequently speaks in the Epistle of the *glorious return* of Jesus which was approaching, but this thought occupies no place in the Gospel narrative. Jesus here announced only His own coming in spirit on the Day of Pentecost, John not having related the great discourse on the last things recorded in Matt. xxiv., in which Jesus had announced His visible return, although he fully believed in this return, which he knew and admitted, (as his Epistle proves), he did not feel at liberty to introduce this subject into the Lord's discourses recorded in his Gospel. Neither has he lent to Jesus certain expressions which were peculiarly his own, as we see from his Epistle, such, for example, as the *anointing of the Holy Spirit*, "*of the sent of God*," and "*the sin unto death*."

Omissions
in the
Gospel of
truths
contained in
the Epistle.

Lastly, let us notice one more general feature.

General-
isations in
the Epistle.

It is easier to establish a firmer intellectual and logical attitude in the discourses of the Gospel than in the Epistle, which leads to the thought that in the former the author had the support of a higher thought than his own, and that consequently they are not his own work. And if we compare more closely the contents of these two compositions, drawn up by the same pen, we shall easily perceive that their author, in composing the Epistle, has generalized, and given us under the form of axioms or maxims, the thoughts expressed in the Gospel in regard to certain special positions. "God so loved the world," Jesus had said; "God is Love," says John. "I am the Light of the world," said Jesus; "God is Light," says John. "Ye are of your father, the devil," said Jesus; "He who committeth sin is of the devil," writes John. "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you," said Jesus to the apostles; "It is not we who first loved God," writes John, "but God who first loved us." The whole Epistle is composed in a similar manner. John extracts from the occasional and striking remarks of his Master, doctrines and, in a certain sense, religious philosophy, useful for all ages, which are contained in them. Who could imagine that the mind that performed this second operation, could be the same as that which revealed itself with such a creative originality and appropriateness in these discourses?

The conclusion to be drawn from all these facts is that, whatever is the resemblance that exists between the discourses of the Gospel and the other writings of the Apostle, there are between these compositions, differences both in contents and in form sufficiently marked to attest a difference of origin between them, and consequently to prove the historical truth of the former.

Moreover, does it not strike every one who has a sense of divine things, that Jesus alone could have spoken as the author of the fourth Gospel makes Him speak? If we admit that there was in the second century a man who was able to make Him speak in such a manner, we must also admit that there existed in the second century a second Jesus, not only equal, but superior to the first. Baur has really supposed the existence at this epoch of some eminent Christian whom he has called the *Great Unknown*. Now-a-days critics refer the existence of this mysterious author nearer to the time of John, they even make him a disciple of this Apostle, from whom he received this spiritual heritage. They ask, for example, whether it might not be that presbyter John, disciple of Jesus, who according to Papias ought to have lived in Asia Minor at the same time and a little later than the Apostle of the same name. But we have only to glance at the writings that we have of the most remarkable men of this period, Clement of Rome, Ignatius of

Comparison
with other
writers of
the first part
of the
second
century.

Antioch, Polycarp of Smyrna, Papias of Hierapolis, to see the immense distance that there is between these fathers and the author of this Gospel, and to understand how he must have shined as a star of the first magnitude in the firmament of the Church, and to conclude that he could not have passed unperceived in the midst of men who were so inferior to him, and could not have remained the Great Unknown.

Internal
evidence of
authorship.

Besides, had we no tradition pointing positively to the Apostle John as the author of this Gospel we might by attentively studying this Gospel, put our finger on the author.

The writer a
Jew.

The fourth Evangelist could only have been a Christian of *Jewish* origin. That is proved by what we have advanced concerning his style and the spirit of his writings.

A Pales-
tinian con-
temporary
with Jesus.

This Judeo-Christian could only have been a Christian of *Palestine* and *contemporary* with Jesus. He knew the minutest details of the different localities of the Holy Land, the size of the Lake of Tiberias, the distance from Bethany to Jerusalem, for instance. He described the country about Jacob's well as, according to M. Renan, only a man could do who had frequently passed it. He is *au fait* as to the relationship between the two high priests, Annas and Caiaphas. He knows exactly how many years they have been rebuilding the Temple when Jesus visits Jerusalem for the first

time after His baptism ; he knew that the Romans had taken from the Jews the right of capital punishment, etc., etc.

This Palestinian contemporary of Jesus, is a A companion of Jesus. member of the intimate circle of friends, formed around the person of the Lord. He knew personally the Apostles Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Peter, etc., and the kind of relation that Jesus had to each of them. The naïve replies of Philip, the spiteful remarks of Judas, the cry of devotion mingled with the unbelief of Thomas, are all known to him. He knew who were the four disciples who by their questions drew forth the instructions of Jesus at that intimate conversation they had with Him on the eve of His death. He knew the name of the high priest's servant, whose ear Peter cut off in Gethsemane ; he recalls the smallest details of the course of the two disciples at the grave of Jesus on the morning of the resurrection, etc., etc. All that would only have been disgusting charlatanism on the part of a man who had not lived in close intimacy with the apostles, and would consequently only treat the disciples as characters in a romance.

This companion of Jesus could only have been An Apostle. one of His *apostles*. He allows himself in many points to complete and present in a quite new light the tradition received in the Church, as we find it recorded in the Synoptics. The narrative

of the fourth Gospel is equivalent to a complete renovation of the history of Jesus transmitted by the Synoptics, harmonizing very well with them, but remaining absolutely independent. Only an apostle, who felt perfectly sure of his authority in the Church, could stand face to face with the most ancient Gospels, already received in the churches, and maintain such a position.

The disciple
whom Jesus
loved.

This apostle could be no other than the *disciple whom Jesus loved*. This is clearly proved by the intimate and personal details that are found in the narrative, particularly the information about the secret communications between Peter and this disciple at the last Supper (xiii. 24-27), or the absolutely autobiographical details of the manner in which this disciple was brought to believe in the resurrection (xx. 8, 9), or the indication of the moment where he understood the accomplishment of Zechariah's prophecy about Jesus's entrance into Jerusalem (xii. 16), the testimony that the author gives us of his presence at the foot of the cross (xix. 35). This testimony can only apply to the disciple "whom Jesus loved," because he is the only one whose presence in the scene with the mother of Jesus is recorded in the narrative. See the touching words in ver. 26.

The son of
Zebedee.

The disciple whom Jesus loved could only be *John, the son of Zebedee*. That is evident from the fact that the other disciples that he speaks of are

all designated in the Gospel by their names—Peter, Andrew, Thomas, Nathanael, etc.,—while the names of John and his brother James nowhere appear. We see the same thing also in chap. xxi. 2, where the two sons of Zebedee, who in all the lists of the Apostles are at the head, are here placed the last, after the other Apostles, and only before two disciples, not Apostles. Now, the disciple whom Jesus loved, who takes part in this scene, according to v. 20 and 21, can not have been James, the other son of Zebedee, for he was dead at a very early date (Acts xii. 2). It can only have been John, his brother. Lastly—and we have here the plainest proof—the disciple whom Jesus loved must have been among the three Apostles preferred by the Lord, viz., Peter, James, and John. Now, it could not be Peter, who, according to the narrative, is distinguished from him, nor James, who died the first of the Apostles, while the disciple whom Jesus loved must have survived all the others, according to ch. xxi. 23. It could then be no other than John.

It is consequently with the fullest confidence that the Church as a whole, and every Christian, can make use of this Gospel, at once so simple and so sublime. The perusal of ten lines of this narrative is the best proof of its authenticity for every upright mind. This intimate and continuous communion with God as a Father could not

The true
proof.

have been imagined, it must have been lived to be contemplated, and contemplated to be recorded in this manner. It is as if the gate of heaven were opened to the view of the dwellers on earth, in order, as the author of this unique book says in conclusion, that every reader may find life in the revelation of Jesus, the Christ, Son of God, as he himself had found life in it.



PRESENT STATE
OF THE
CHRISTIAN ARGUMENT FROM PROPHECY

BY
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THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY:
56, PATERNOSTER ROW; 65, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD; AND
164, PICCADILLY.

Argument of the Tract.

THE conditions which must meet in any utterance or writing to warrant its being regarded as a prophecy are stated. While other great ends are served by prophetic teaching, the predictive element is shown to be the chief one apologetically.

The Messianic element in the Old Testament is traced from its earliest appearance down to the latest book ; and it is shown that the Christian is justified in regarding the first promise as the prediction of a personal Saviour ; that the promises to Abraham, the blessing of Judah by Jacob, the words of Balaam, the promise to Moses of the rise of a prophet like unto himself, can only be adequately interpreted by regarding them as referring to a personal Messiah. The rise of the Davidic kingdom, the relation of David's career and experiences to a great king and sufferer who was to descend from him, the Messianic references in the Psalms, and the frequent references to the Davidic descent of the Messiah in the various prophets down to Malachi are traced. The Davidic element in the prophecies is shown to be strengthened by the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem. The cycle of predictions bearing on Christ's life and ministry, and the wonderful ones relating to His death are noticed. The conflicting views of unbelieving critics and the concessions of Strauss on important points are exposed. The widespread expectation of the rise of a great kingdom in the East produced by the prophecies closes the first branch of the argument.

The prophecies relating to the Christian Church are then examined. The relation of Judaism to Christianity and the superiority of the latter are shown. The predicted spread and universal prevalence of Christianity when there was no likelihood of fulfilment, and the ideal of a universal religion in the prophecies, are inexplicable on any natural theory. Objections are anticipated and refuted by the prediction of failure, delay, reaction, and corruption.

The predictions of the captivities and dispersions of the Jews, the New Testament prophecies of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the predictions concerning the Arabs, Egypt, Nineveh, Babylon, and Tyre, are examined, and the conclusions are drawn that they have not the characteristics of confessedly human predictions, that ordinary explanations are inadequate, and that the Christian view accounts for all the facts.

PRESENT STATE

OF THE

CHRISTIAN ARGUMENT FROM PROPHECY.



It has been commonly and justly held that three conditions must meet in an utterance or writing to warrant its being regarded as a prophecy, or used as the seal of a revelation. First, *it must lie beyond human sagacity or conjecture.* A prophecy requires to be as truly supernatural as a miracle of power. If the death of Christ could by any natural means have been foretold in the days of David or Isaiah the notice would cease to be a prediction, being reduced to such an anticipation of the rejection of the Just One as occurs in the *Republic* of Plato ; and on the same principle, the Bible threat of the downfall of Jerusalem would only rank with Macaulay's picture of the New Zealander amidst the ruins of London.

The conditions of true prophecy.

First condition.

Secondly, *the prophecy must precede the fulfilment.* It must not be history disguised as prophecy ; and

Second condition.

hence the Christian writer must meet the frequent allegations that the dates of Scripture books are placed too early, or that passages now look prophetic because they have received sharpening touches after the event.

Third
condition.

The third condition of prophecy is, *that a real fulfilment has taken place*. The rationalist will grant in the Bible many bright anticipations of a golden age, which according to him have missed the mark. We must be prepared, therefore, to show in history definite and specific fulfilments. It is not necessary that the full accomplishment of a prophecy should be exhibited; for surely God may accomplish a great scheme, or even a part of it, gradually.

Uses of
prophetic
teaching.

It is a mistake, however, to treat prophecy as a purely evidential arrangement, or to lose sight of other great ends and uses served by prophetic teaching. There were all along, in the Jewish and Christian Church, men who, under the name of "prophets," or some kindred one, were the great teachers of the people, not only in regard to the future but in regard to the present, expounding and enforcing all spiritual truth and moral duty, and shining out with peculiar splendour as national guides in every field of religious thought and action. They were necessary to the system called the theocracy in all its parts; and it was in virtue of this general mission that they carried out in God's

The
functions of
prophets in
the Jewish
theocracy.

name plans and measures where the knowledge of the future was the very condition of the enterprise and of its success. As it was theirs to work this peculiar element into the frame of the divine government of Israel and of the scheme of redemption, they could not but derive from it special authority. Prophecy, considered as prediction, both lent to and borrowed from the mighty moral scheme into which it was introduced. It prepared the way and shaped the work of all divine heralds, including the last and greatest, as well as attested their claims. It filled men with the knowledge of coming events, and thus with interest and hope in regard to them; and thus it not only made development possible, but when this seemed to be defeated or delayed, it brightened the sky and revealed again its day-star in men's hearts. This broad and comprehensive view of prophecy, as embracing moral and religious leadership, with needful infallibility on other points, and, so to speak, constitutional recognition as thus endowed, must not be surrendered; but it is evident that as an argument for the gospel, we must mainly draw from its superhuman intimations of the future, and fix attention on the prophet as the organ of the omniscience of Him who "declares the end from the beginning."

The
functions
of prophecy.

The
predictive
element
the chief
one apolo-
getically.

The predictive element in the religion of ancient Israel, which reappears in Christianity, though but another form of the supernatural, will be found

Prediction
completes
and fortifies
miracle.

to have a singular interest and value, as completing and fortifying what is commonly called miracle. One great objection to miracle urged by Hume and others entirely disappears. There is no longer here a dependence on testimony for events entirely past. If not the oracles, the fulfilments in multitudes of cases belong to our own time. Ordinary history makes good the announcement which is not by itself a miracle; and ordinary history or observation makes good the accomplishment, which must equally be a matter of fact; and all can judge whether the miracle is begotten between them. Besides, prophecy forms a chain even more than other miracle. Every part supports every other, binding also the doctrine together, as for example in type and antitype by its cohesion; and every fresh confirmation, even in the smallest point, supports the whole.

In this Tract I shall consider prophecy as it bears *first*, on the Messiah; *secondly*, on the Christian Church; *thirdly*, on the Jewish people; and *fourthly*, on the other nations of the world.

I.

Messianic
prophecy.

WITH reference to the Messiah, we must mainly draw here from the Old Testament. It is indeed striking that the predictive element in regard to Him also reappears in the New, not only in the utterances of others regarding His future, but in

His own. Still it is to the earlier utterances as farthest separated from the event, and woven most into a scheme, that attention has been most directed. It cannot be denied by any candid mind that these do not admit of any explanation in harmony with mere ordinary laws.

In the earliest parts of the Old Testament, this mysterious element already appears. Jews and Christians have alike found such references in the writings generally ascribed to Moses. Nor do they disappear, if the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch be broken up, or its date, in whole or in part, carried as far down as any of the theories which have been started on the subject may demand. The most advanced theory still places the utterances centuries before the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. The development of prophecy may not in the more novel scheme be so visible ; but prophecy, or what looks like it, remains.

Its early appearance in the Old Testament.

This applies to what has been called the first Gospel, in Gen. iii. 15. It is possible so to allegorize the Temptation and Fall, as to bring out of this verse nothing more than that the human race, apparently for ever defeated, should still for ever overcome, and even by that very defeat and suffering. It is possible to see in the words only the announcement of a destructive conflict between men and serpents. But the ordinary Christian does not put any violence upon this language, when

The first Gospel.

A personal
deliverer
foretold.

he regards it as foretelling a great and decisive deliverance for the race of man from the dark and evil power that had prevailed over it; nay, its terms support him when he goes further, and believes it to refer to a single Deliverer, who should be in a peculiar sense the Seed of the woman, and who should only crush his great antagonist by being himself bruised.

Confirm-
ation of
this view.

Everything in the context supports this deep interpretation of the oracle. We have on the one hand the exclusion of the race from the tree of life; and on the other, the name, expressive of returning hope, given to the woman, Havah—the Living. We have the origin of sacrifice, and the fulfilment of a strife between the seed of the woman and of the serpent, in the Cainite and Sethite races begun, with the nursing of hope in the latter through the translation of Enoch and the birth of Noah. The deluge follows, confirmed so much by the Chaldean discoveries, but still more by the moral grandeur of the Bible record, with its entire exclusion of idolatry, its clear doctrine of judgment tempered by mercy, and its ratification of the earlier covenant by a fresh symbol prophesying the continuance of the race. There is also, in connexion with the children of Noah, taken with the following chapter, the great ethnological forecast of the history of the world, so unlike everything in the earliest literature; for as Jehovah

is the "God of Shem," the leading place of the Shemite stock in religion is indicated, with the comparative degradation of the Hamite, and the passing over of the knowledge of God to the Japhetic, in a way which the whole relations of Asia to Europe, and reactions of Europe on Asia more and more confirm. A writer so little given to prophetic fancies as the late Baron Bunsen has been struck with this; and in his *Bibelwerk* has seen in this dwelling of Japhet in the tents of Shem, what "in the highest sense is fulfilled in Christianity."¹

The next step in prophetic literature brings us into contact with the name of Abraham. His call, as it is known in Jewish and Christian theology, designed in connexion with his migration, to save the world from growing idolatry, has had light recently cast upon it, showing that "Ur" of the Chaldees was in the midst of moon and sun worship; and even his residence in Canaan, and war with the kings of the East, has been confirmed by the evidence of an Elamite dynasty of that age reaching westward to the Mediterranean. The first utterance of an apparently prophetic character made to Abraham is in Gen. xii. 2, 3:—

The call of
Abraham

Confirm-
ation of the
Bible
account.

"I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great: and thou shalt be a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee, and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

¹ *Bibelwerk*, I. p. 23.

The stress
laid on the
call of
Abraham
and the
promises
made to
him.

With regard to this we would notice that—

First, the greatest stress is laid on it. It stands at the head of a visibly new development in the history. It is in one way or other repeated more frequently than anything else in the Book of Genesis. The temporal part of the promise, that Abraham should have a son, or that he should be the father of nations, or many nations, or that kings should be his offspring, is reiterated too often to be here stated; while the spiritual side of the promise, as to all nations being blessed in him, is repeated twice again in his own lifetime, once¹ when interceding for Sodom, and again² after offering up his son. This last time it is with the variation that the families are to be blessed in his seed. In like manner the promise is renewed to Isaac,³ and to Jacob.⁴ On this last occasion, the blessing of all the nations has the formulas united with it, “in thee and in thy seed.” This universality of blessing is carried over into the seventy-second Psalm, ver. 17. It cannot be doubted that we have here a turning-point, which is held to affect henceforth all Jewish and all human history.

The
Messianic
sense of the
promise.

Secondly, the sense of the words cannot be less than Messianic. I do not argue this chiefly from the creation of a separate people, and the securing of a separate territory through which the work of

¹ Gen. xviii. 18.

² Gen. xxii. 18.

³ Gen. xxvi. 4

⁴ Gen. xxviii. 14.

redemption was to be accomplished. The context of Scripture would draw this passage thus indirectly to a Messianic significance. But this is only the smallest part of the oracle. How are the nations to be blessed in Abraham but in a spiritual manner? It is explained in connexion with circumcision that the covenant with Abraham meant that God was his God. Was not this blessing then to be extended, so that the very blessing of Abraham should become that of the nations? It has been held by some that the grammatical form of the original only means that Abraham was to be so prosperous that the nations should wish for themselves the same prosperity. This may be here and there a Hebrew idiom; but unfortunately for this scheme it is said that Abraham was to “be a blessing”; and unless we arbitrarily limit the sense, the nations must have wished this overflow of his deepest prosperity into their souls. The Messiah, therefore, as a Teacher and Saviour was necessary for this. And though we cannot say that the personality of the Messiah is here made prominent or sole, so far as the words go, yet it must be taken into account, in the very nature of things, so that without an Abrahamic seed the saying could not have been fulfilled.

Objection
answered

This then leads to a *third* remark, that the words are not only a Messianic truth, but a real Messianic prophecy. It would not be very easy

A real
Messianic
prophecy
contained in
the promise
to Abraham.

The anti-
cipation of
world-wide
spiritual
blessing
through one
man in-
explicable
on any
natural
theory.

Defies all
post-dating
of the
Pentateuch
and the
Psalms.

even on their temporal side to deny to these utterances a predictive character; but it might be objected that the bringing into Canaan of a new race from Mesopotamia with a new founder, though it involved great changes and race developments, might have been risked as a guess, or written after the event. But from what construction of history, or from what data in time, could the anticipation of a world-wide spiritual blessing in connexion with one man have arisen? No mythic greatness of Abraham, no actual influence of his supposed Jewish seed upon the world could have originated the story. If you take it either in its germinal character, or as expanded in the seventy-second Psalm, the world never saw and never could have conceived a universal religion of righteousness and peace. This defies all post-dating of the Pentateuch and Psalms; for you are little nearer the phenomenon at the end than at the beginning. Is it then a dream, a mere devout prophetic craze? Those are not entitled to say so who think that the whole world has received some permanent blessing through Abraham's seed, least of all those who with Kuenen trace back to them a pure monotheism. Much more those who see not only the one God exalted, but reconciled and made nigh by the incarnation of His own Son as Abraham's great descendant, and His gospel moving on to bless all nations, and who recognize —

“The blessing of Abraham as coming on the Gentiles by Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit by faith.”¹

Every condition of prophecy here meets—an anterior oracle—a glimpse beyond mortal ken into the history of religion, and an actual connexion of Abraham’s name with an influence more and more filling the world. Why is it that nothing equal can be said of any of the shadowy kings dug up in the homes of Abraham’s childhood?

An interesting step is taken in the development of this plan, as Christians believe, in the blessing of his sons by the dying Jacob. The unanimous tradition of Judaism also, as attested in its earliest translations, targums, and commentaries has found in the blessing of Judah² an anticipation of the Messiah. In reasoning, however, with those who have forsaken alike the Church and the Synagogue, I cannot lay quite the same stress on this otherwise remarkable verse as on the utterances regarding Abraham. It is, indeed, as helped by the Abrahamic oracles, and still more than in their case by the announcements of later ages, that its value to the argument is realized. But value it still has, as the force of many prophecies does not lie so much in their uniform resistless application to Christ, as in their manifold and often varying, yet still appreciable, applicability. With this qualification the words deserve to be pondered:

All conditions of true prophecy meet in the promises made to Abraham.

Jacob’s dying blessing on his sons.

¹ Gal. iii. 14.

² Gen. xlix. 10.

The blessing
on Judah

“The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto Him shall the gathering [homage] of the people [peoples] be.”

It needs no force to put on this language a Messianic sense. Though the tribe of Judah is described in its lion-like strength, and in other features of temporal prosperity, yet the oracle professes to refer to “the last days;” and the patriarch interrupts the whole series of disclosures with the words of lofty spiritual import :

“I have waited for Thy salvation, O Lord !”

Messianic
features of
it.

The words anyhow suit a voluntary rule far more than a conquest ; and this is indisputable and a striking additional Messianic feature, if according to Gesenius, who did not always adhere to the view, the majority of Hebraists have rightly understood by “Shiloh” a personal name, and one of the same import with Isaiah ix. 5, “The Prince of peace.” It is not easy to think that these words were an after-thought, designed to fill up a gap in the genealogy of the Jewish Messiah, which had now been traced through Eve and Noah, down to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ; and yet are we to ascribe it to accident that they coincide with the tribe of our Lord’s birth, and prepare for all that is said of Him as the Son of David ? Nor is it without weight that beyond the commanding place of Judah, which outshone everything in Israel, and at length eclipsed its name, the advent of the

greater and wider Ruler should have occurred at the critical period when the sceptre was departing and had not quite departed. Although this oracle may not have the absolutely incontestable force (to unbelievers) of the blessing of Abraham, it contains so much both of prophet-like matter and fulfilment that it cannot well be disregarded.

The same remark applies to the first grand echo of this regal utterance—the prophecy of Balaam in Numbers xxiv. 17, as to the star that should come out of Jacob, and the sceptre that should rise out of Israel. Some may regard all this as balanced by what they may think the legend of the ass that spake: but not those who consider how masterly as a moral study the portrait of Balaam is, and how marvellous as lyrics are his oracles. For the view of this passage, which makes it contain a prophecy, and that of one far beyond any ordinary king like David, who subdued Moab and Edom, there is to be considered first the whole current of Jewish interpretation. This was so decisive that when the last great effort of the Jews to shake off the Roman yoke was made under the emperor Hadrian, the false Messiah who led them, supported by all the influence of one of their greatest Rabbis, Akiba, assumed this emblem, and was known as the son of a star (*Bar-Cocheba*). As applied to Christ, it denotes a Messiah of a very different order; and there is a peculiar gran-

The
prophecy of
Balaam.

Jewish in-
terpretation.

Grandeur of
the
prophecy.

Its appli-
cation to the
Messiah
necessary.

Confirm-
ation to
believers in
miracles.

deur in making the prophet, who had been hired to curse, pronounce a blessing on the people of God, under this last and greatest of their leaders, and celebrate his enduring sway, when not only present enemies, like Moab, Edom, and Amalek, but others far in the future, like Assyria and Rome, passed away. It has been justly said that the reference to the "ships from the coast of Chittim" (Cyprus), which can only refer to the eastward movements of the Roman power, excludes every supposition which could make this a late interpolation in the Pentateuch, and constrain an application to the Messianic King, to whom the Old Testament horizon ever stretches. This lesson is independent of the star of the wise men in the Gospel of Matthew. To those who believe in miracles it will be a special confirmation, that this particular feature in our Lord's history is thus pre-indicated, which brings on the scene men from the east so very different from the seer who first caught sight of the emblem. But the fulfilment would have been true in a great and irresistible Saviour-king, defeating and outlasting all the powers of the world, even had no literal star heralded His birth; and thus attested by friend and foe—by the founder of Israel's line, and the diviner called in to extirpate it—that royal image starts up in the Bible, which never afterwards forsakes it.

It is worthy of notice, however, that the Penta-

teuch does not end until another figure or shadow of this coming Leader is disclosed, viz., that of a Prophet. This takes place in the eighteenth chapter of Deuteronomy, where Moses from the fifteenth verse to the end speaks of the Prophet that should be raised up like unto himself. Two views have generally divided interpreters here. The one of these regards the text as making provision for the continuance of a prophetic body in Israel, so that the chosen nation might not be left to envy the heathen, nor on the other hand be visited with such immediate and terrible revelations as had almost overwhelmed them at Sinai. This continuous prophecy, real but mediate and human, like that of Moses, is regarded by these interpreters as the thing promised, while the Messiah is held to come in as the culmination of the whole. Now, even this view is a wonderful reach into the future, as there was no time for a prophecy after the event, and how could Moses or any one personating him know that he stood at the head of a continuous body, and that revelation, such as he knew it in himself, was to be prolonged to an indefinite future? But it is impossible to limit the words of Moses to this collective sense; and both what he knew of himself and what the Old Testament literature unanimously accords to him—a place altogether pre-eminent, must have led to a proportionately exalted idea of the coming Prophet. This does not

The
Prophet like
unto Moses.

Mediate in-
terpretation.

Immediate
inter-
pretation.

The personal application adopted by the whole Old Testament Church.

The expectation ascribed to Moses and its fulfilment unaccountable unless supernatural.

exclude successors in his work, who rather are taken for granted; but the emphasis must have been laid upon a true Equal, one who should make a new beginning, and speak with the commanding authority which he alone possessed. Hence this view impressed itself on the whole Old Testament Church—as we see in the latest oracle of Malachi, and as is vouched for by the New Testament taken simply as a human document, recording among Jews and Samaritans the expectation of a transcendent Teacher and Reformer, such as the world had but once seen before. Indeed, in the circumstances of the case, to be equal to Moses was to be greater, for if Moses was simply repeated, what need of another lawgiver or founder? How, then, can the denier of revelation account for these facts: *first*, for the expectation ascribed to Moses, and *secondly*, for its fulfilment? The very desire and anticipation were singular. Great men do not usually subordinate themselves to others, or think of their work as waiting on some greater personality, who is to take up its unfinished issues. The Christian scheme of things accounts for this in Moses, who looked not only for a kindred spirit but for a personal Saviour, whose work was more than the sequel of his own. And still more wonderful is the realization of this hope, which after fifteen centuries arrived: for the prevailing opinion even of the world is that Christ is of the same mould

with Moses, only greater and more commanding,—working in the same element, and making the work of Moses, which seemed exhausted or defeated, renew and exalt itself in His own. By what mystery, then, did the Christian Church in its faint beginning seize on this greatness of Christ, dream—if it was a dream—that Moses stooped on the Mount to this yet obscure Prophet, and that God had even come nearer in Him than in Moses' days? He who will answer this will find the key to this oracle and a great deal more; he who will, to escape an answer, deny redemption, with prophecy and miracle as its handmaids, must make all history common place, and treat Moses and Jesus as alike only in bringing them down from any throne of greatness to share its fall.

The Church's conception of Christ unaccountable on any natural explanation of prophecy.

Prophecy takes an extraordinary leap forward, and in another direction, with the rise of the kingdom of Israel in David. There is an intermediate figure in Samuel. But the history itself passes on to the regal period, developing what, in spite of failure in Saul, was the true meaning of all that went before, and bringing upon the scene the grandest emblem and beginning of what, in Messianic days, was to be known as "the kingdom of heaven." The glimpses in the oracles of Jacob and of Balaam, which had once and again been suddenly renewed in the dark and troubled ages of the Judges, now break out into

The rise of the Davidic kingdom.

David a
turning-
point in
human
history.

His mission.

The
crowning
revelation is
given.

steady and concentrated light, and in connection with the person, the line, and almost more, the Psalms of David, lighten the world to all generations. David is indeed, like Moses, one of the turning points in human history, as supreme in gifts, as immeasurable in grace; if not so awful and gigantic, more tender and captivating; and by his very fall and repentance brought nearer to human sympathy and tears. Fitted by unrivalled military genius and statesmanship to give the chosen people strength and repose, and, as the man after God's own heart, to build up the theocracy as a great national kingdom and worship with a fidelity never equalled, and that have made Zion the joy of the whole earth, he enriched that sanctuary and every other with the incomparable treasure of a sacred song, which, unlike every other form of lyric, leaves all terrestrial glories and hopes unsung, and amidst the unutterable sin, sorrow, and solitude in the soul of man, is still a perpetual thirsting after God, the living God. This mission of David's, unexhausted and inexhaustible, has made him the bosom friend of all saints in every age and clime; and to this belong the extreme vicissitudes of his experience, and also his kingly elevation and trials, fitting in to the divine plan of the descent from his line of a yet greater King and Sufferer. The announcement by the prophet Nathan to David that his line should include the Messiah, and thus last

for ever, is, with no reason to dispute the statement, recorded in 2 Samuel vii., in connexion with David's purpose to build a temple; and with equal beauty this oracle reappears in the "last words of David," in 2 Samuel xxiii. 1-8, where he recalls his twofold function as one standing in relation to the Messiah, and also as the psalmist of Israel; and where he derives comfort from the covenant thus made as "ordered in all things and sure."

It does not follow, indeed, that David had no revelations as to the Messiah before this last and crowning one, or that he did not see in his own chequered and wonderful life prefigurations of a yet stranger and more glorious destiny. This is one of the questions of criticism respecting which there never will be absolute unity, as to how far at any time David consciously painted his own experience; how far that of the Messiah; and how many of his royal psalms, such as perhaps the second and the sixteenth, preceded the special promise; how many, like the eighteenth, twenty-second, and one hundred and tenth followed it. It is enough that whether of Davidic or Solomonic, or yet later authorship, an ever-recurrent echo starts up in the Psalter of the kingly birth and call of the Messiah, and that in grand resonant cadences, as in the seventy-second, the eighty-ninth, and one hundred and thirty-second Psalms, His descent from David fills the Christian ear in every land.

Unsettled
questions of
criticism.

An ever-
recurrent
echo of the
Messiah in
the Psalms.

Later announcements.

In perfect harmony with this fixed position of Davidic descent, are many announcements in the pages of that written prophecy which commenced about 800 B.C., and ran down till the close of the canon in Malachi. Thus in Isaiah iv. 2, mention is made of one who is simply spoken of as the "Branch" (the branch of Jehovah), but this title is connected expressly in Isaiah xi. 1, with the family of David,—

The Branch.

"There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of His roots,"

with all the usual attributes of the Messianic kingdom. It could hardly be urged by any objector that this might possibly apply to some other descendant of Jesse of Bethlehem than in the line of David; for the obvious reason of going back to Jesse is the decayed state into which the royal family was to fall; just as in Amos ix. 11, we read—

"In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen."

The child born, the son given.

In like manner the great oracle, Isaiah ix. 6—

"Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given,"

is connected with David's line, for in the next verse it is said—

"Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end *upon the throne of David*;"

while these utterances all seem to claim a higher nature for this ruler, as also in Isaiah vii. 14—

“Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel;”

connexion with David's house is more or less clearly involved, as even in this last case, the sign is given as a pledge that in spite of invasion the royal line should not fail, and the holy land is thus addressed, “Thy land, O Immanuel!”¹

In Jeremiah the same notices recur, evidently coloured by foregoing anticipations: thus, Jeremiah xxiii. 6; xxxiii. 15—

“Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a king shall reign and prosper.”

The
righteous
Branch.

“In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David.”

There is a text in Ezekiel xxxiv. 23,—

“And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David,”—

which speaks as if not a descendant of David, but David himself, returning to earth might be the future king; and the same language is found in xxxvii. 24—

David's
return to
rule
apparently
predicted.

“David my servant shall be king over them.”

But it can hardly be supposed that this prophet who shows himself everywhere so familiar with Isaiah and Jeremiah meant anything different; and we may well understand also in the same light the utterance in Hosea iii. 4, 5, spoken two hundred years before Ezekiel, in which, anticipating a cap-

¹ Isa. viii. 8.

tivity that should lead to the people of Israel being "many days without a king," he adds—

"Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king."

Detailed
predictions
concerning
the great
Ruler.

To this mass of testimony, all pointing forward to a great ruler, who should spring from David, and yet be greater, I would simply add, as the references are so well known, the two texts, one of which¹ declares that this ruler should be born in Bethlehem, which was David's birth-place; and another,² that he should come riding on an ass to Jerusalem, which had been the seat of David's power. We are thus brought face to face with the question, How the deniers of Christianity as a revelation have treated this great amount of striking evidence, and how far they have been able to resolve these apparent prophecies into mere natural guesses and coincidences?

Jewish
inter-
pretations.

It is hard to be denied that the Jewish literature, antecedent to, and outside of Christianity, now preserved in the Talmud and kindred writings, applied almost all the texts which we have quoted, with others that are to follow, to the Messiah. The only noticeable exception, perhaps, is the passage as to Immanuel, where in their interpretations there is something like silence, though not contradiction.³ It was interesting to see how when the

¹ Micah v. 2.

² Zech. ix. 9.

³ This statement is borne out by the citations under the different texts from the great work of Schoettgen *De Messia*. Dresden and Leipzig, 1742.

great Deistical controversy of last century was waged against the argument from prophecy, as against all other parts of the Christian argument, the leaders of English unbelief would treat these facts in the history of Jewish interpretation. Their chief representative, Anthony Collins, boldly denied not only that Isaiah and the other prophets referred to any single person or descendant of David, who thence came to be looked for as the Messiah, but that any clear or consistent expectation of such a person could be found in the line of Jewish tradition for any period worth naming before Christ.

It was not possible that such a violation of all literary fairness should not be avenged; and hence in our own century, Strauss, in order to build up his own fabric has run the ploughshare of destruction over the foundations of that of Collins. It was not necessary in the eighteenth century to account for the origin of Christianity; but this is now the life and death question of unbelief; and Strauss required for this purpose a long and wide currency of expectation of a Messiah among the Jews, who was not a mere conqueror and world-monarch, but a teacher also, and even a sufferer, whom the disciples of Jesus, when their Master was crucified, might console themselves by finding, and plausibly teach their countrymen to find, in the Old Testament books, and in the current interpretations of them. Hence he cannot make too much of the help of

Messianic predictions denied by Collins and the Deists of last century.

Strauss's views of the Messianic element in Hebrew literature conflicts with Collins.

Strauss's
concessions
as to the
Old
Testament.

those "Jews" whom Collins treated so contemptuously, and has even possibly exaggerated the Messianic element in Hebrew and Talmudical literature. But his concessions as to the Old Testament are most important. Thus in his *Neues Leben Jesu*, 1864 (p. 170), he says,—

"In the prophets the tendency to a more spiritual form of religion was accompanied by another. They made, no doubt, the elevation of the people of Israel to true piety the indispensable condition of the return of better times . . . But while they painted this better future after the model of the good old times which the people had enjoyed under their king David, there was connected with this hope the expectation of a ruler of David's style, of David's line, who should exalt his people from the depth of their present fall, to a height of power and prosperity surpassing the days of the David of old."

The
question of
fulfilment.

Thus the Christian Church, at the very hands of its opponents, regains its prophecies, so far as their early origin and spiritual meaning are concerned. And now the only question is as to the fulfilment; for if Jesus of Nazareth be really a descendant of the royal family of David, here is a most wonderful reach into the future in the case of one who is confessedly the most remarkable figure in history. Hence the royal descent of Jesus is denied by Renan, who charges Him with assuming the title "Son of David" not ignorantly, but against His own better feelings.

"He allowed them to give him a title without which he could not hope for any success."¹

¹ *Vie de Jésus*, p. 238.

Renan does not seem to see that if Jesus accepted the title, as is granted, He must have done so not only in good faith, but considering His means of knowledge, with moral certainty; and that to affirm the opposite is to aggravate all the difficulties and contradictions put by him into what he admits to be the greatest of human characters. Strauss here, though he does not thus degrade the Saviour morally, is involved in equal perplexity. He grants that the Messiah was universally believed among the Jewish people to be the "Son of David." He grants also that Jesus claimed to be the Messiah. And he grants that He applied to Himself the prophecies above quoted from Isaiah and Jeremiah which foretold that the Messiah should have this descent. How then can Strauss exclude the inference that Jesus believed Himself to be the descendant of David? By the most arbitrary supposition, that Jesus wished to educate His disciples and the people into the idea that the Messiah was not to be the Son of David, which was a mere worldly name, but something more spiritual. The only shadow of proof that he can adduce for this is that Jesus challenged in the Temple the current interpretation of the one hundred and tenth Psalm, and wished to suggest that the Messiah was not to be David's son, but his Lord, though Strauss, of course, cannot grant that He contended for any

Renan's
position.

Strauss's
perplexity.

His
arbitrary
supposition.

Jesus
regarded by
His
followers
and by
Himself as
the Messiah.

Difficulties
in the
genealogies
not in-
superable.

Far out-
weighed by
other con-
siderations.

higher nature as His prerogative. But what this intermediate something between Davidic descent and a higher nature was, which Jesus here suggested, Strauss has not explained, and as his interpretation had no precursors, so it has had no successors. It is as certain then, as anything can be, if we grant the least historic value to the narratives, that Jesus was not only regarded by His followers, who had the best means of knowing, but by Himself, as the descendant of David; and when we think of the care with which the Jews kept their registers, and even of the security which a great family tradition like this always carries with it for being accurately transmitted, we may consider it, in all the circumstances of the case, as truly remarkable that so much evidence confirms this lofty claim. There are difficulties in the genealogies, but these have not been found insuperable by the ablest scholars; and the fact, that the Davidic birth was believed, not only by the evangelists, but by Paul¹ and by the author of the Apocalypse, whom most rationalists now regard as the apostle John,² but above all by the Founder of Christianity Himself, and was accepted in an age when the whole evidence was patent, as a foundation principle of the new religion, must be held far to outweigh these remaining obscurities.

Far stronger, however, does this Davidic element

¹ Rom. i. 3.

² Rev. xxii. 16.

become, when we take in the actual birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, apparently foretold, as we have seen, in Micah v. 2. Jewish tradition was here, as far as we know, unanimous; and, according to the Gospels, it found its accomplishment. Strauss cannot here deny the agreement with Micah; for as the mythical theory demands, the history itself must be moulded by the earlier notice, and its Jewish echoes. But can the perversion of history as he holds it, be admitted, and a Christ born at Nazareth be turned into one born in Bethlehem? Strauss has granted how difficult it was to do this, when the facts were so widely known. Why, then, are the evangelists to be credited with a tortuous and unhistorical procedure instead of a simple and true one? Or how can Strauss and Renan find any authority for roundly asserting, against their united testimony, that Jesus was born at Nazareth? There is here nothing like miracle in the fact itself, and now to follow, now to desert, the evangelists in natural events (and it was quite as natural for a subsequently renowned Jew to be born at Bethlehem, as at Nazareth) is mere license. Luke brings Jesus to Bethlehem, they say, to fulfil a prophecy; and do they not remove Him to escape one? The prejudice is at least equal, and unfortunately for the modern critics, they are not, and cannot be, themselves authorities in ancient history.

The birth of
Jesus at
Bethlehem.

The
assertion of
Strauss and
Renan that
He was born
at Nazareth
contrary to
all evidence.

The
entry into
Jerusalem.

Strauss
admits that
it might
have
happened.

Recent
criticism
confirms the
admission.

With regard to the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, the city of David, as the foregoing notices in Zech. ix. 9, are so clear, as to have drawn after them an immense body of Jewish Messianic tradition, so the historical accounts in the Gospels are less contested. Reimarus in the last century founded on the incident his attack on Jesus for attempting to set up a temporal kingdom. Renan incorporates the essential facts in his own narrative.¹ Strauss, though he affirms that the tradition was sufficient to have created the history, also grants that the history in itself might well have happened.² The whole tendency of recent gospel criticism, and especially the failure of objections to the fourth Gospel, which here, in a rare instance, repeats an incident fully stated in the Synoptists, confirm the admission. Let it be remembered also that the tenth verse of the ninth chapter of Zechariah has had a great fulfilment: for He who rode in this lowly triumph into Jerusalem has been a true Davidic king, as elsewhere pictured, and especially in the seventy-second Psalm, cutting off the chariot, the horse, and the battle-bow, and speaking peace to the nations. If any say therefore that Jesus rode into Jerusalem arbitrarily to fulfil the prophecy, they are met by its own terms; for the history of the world has supported Him, and—

¹ *Vie de Jésus*, p. 375.

² *Neues Leben Jesu*, p. 526.

“His dominion has been from sea to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth.”

At this point a brief notice may be given of the large cycle of apparent predictions bearing on Christ's life and ministry. It seems to be indicated that some messenger should go before Him, as in Isaiah xl. 3 and Malachi iv. 5, 6; and as in this passage Elijah is mentioned, the prevalent opinion of the Jews has been, that Elijah should literally return, and do this office for the Messiah. It is equally certain that Jesus claimed to be thus heralded by the Baptist; and that John took this position. It is easy to say that there is mistake of prophecy or exaggeration of friendly relations here. But the singularity is that the coincidence in time of two great teachers—one of whom, if the narrative be worth anything, thus stooped to the other, is an historical fact, which could not have been foreseen; and all that is needed to make it a prophecy, is the use of a figurative name for a literal—a feature quite common in the prophetic style. It is worthy of remark that Riehm, a high authority in these discussions, though adverse to detached and sporadic interpretations, regards this as a true prediction, and one which brings out the depth of the Old Testament.¹

The
forerunner.

Jesus and
the Baptist.

Riehm's
admission.

The same writer, whose reserve and caution no one will question, accepts as—

¹ *Messianische Weissagung. Studien and Kritiken*, 1869, II. 271.

“Quite unassailable by historical criticism, the surprising accordance of New Testament fulfilment¹ with the Old Testament prophecy,² that to the dwellers by the Lake of Gennesaret and Jordan, of the tribes of Zebulon and Naphtali, the light of Messianic salvation should first arise ;”³

where it may be added that alike in the oracle and the history the “darkness” of a depressed, outcast, and half paganized state, strangely contrasts with Renan’s pictures of Galilee.

Jewish
expectation
concerning
the Messiah.

That the Messiah should work miracles, so as at least not to fall below the great names of the Old Testament period, was, as all admit, universally expected by the Jews. The writers who support the mythical or legendary theory appeal to Isaiah xxxv. 5, 6, which furnished according to them a kind of programme such as Jesus was bound to fulfil. Strauss is here inclined to think that Jesus disclaimed in His reply to the messengers of John physical wonders, and applied the text of Isaiah only to His cures on the soul. All the literal cures which he allows to Jesus were due to nervous sympathy and influence of imagination. But Strauss has here unwittingly involved himself in great difficulty. He grants that the people were sufficiently cool to credit the Baptist with no miracles. He grants that the class of marvels, which were truly miraculous, such as cures of the blind and raisings of the dead, were then, as always, in the nature of things, distin-

Strauss’s
dilemma
concerning
Christ’s
miracles.

¹ Matt. iv. 13.

² Isa. viii. 23.

³ Riehm, p. 277.

guishable from natural effects on the nervous system.¹ He also grants that the people expected from the Messiah the greatest wonders. He has, therefore, failed to explain how miracles without reality made such an impression, and has thus left the supernatural narratives as necessary as ever. But if so, do not the prophecies also stand? Had the words of Isaiah been meant for true miracles they could not have been stronger; and it is one of the infirmities of this scheme, that in seeking to generate an ideal miracle from an ideal prophecy, it threatens to establish the reality of both.

His failure to explain the impression made.

All ages have admired the exquisite beauty of thought and harmony of numbers with which the Davidic king in the first half of Isaiah is brought upon the scene, while all nature is transformed by His sceptre into gentleness and peace. Not less enchanting are the pictures in the second half of the book, where the monarch passes into the teacher, the comforter, the inexhaustibly tender and patient servant of Jehovah, who feeds His flock like a shepherd, who has the tongue of the learned that He may know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary,—

Isaiah's pictures of the advent of the Davidic king.

“Who does not cry nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street, and who does not quench the smoking flax, nor break the bruised reed.”

Is there one being in all history to whom these words and many others are so instinctively applied

Their application to Jesus Christ.

¹ *Neues Leben Jesu*, p. 267.

as to Jesus Christ? and could He have more significantly begun His ministry in Nazareth than by quoting and applying to Himself the utterance—

The
ministry of
Christ.

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek,” etc.¹

Do we not hear already the words of beatitude, “Blessed are the meek,” “Blessed are they that mourn,” “Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden”? It is vain to speak here of a first and second Isaiah. If there are two, it is still more wonderful than if there is one. Nor is the argument weakened by the various application of the title “Servant of Jehovah,” now to a collective Israel, and now to one individual or “Elect,” in whom the idea of service is perfectly realized: for much of prophecy, as in the Psalms, is equally typical, and the unity of Christ and His body is thus revealed. The applicability of these Isaian oracles to the meek and lowly Teacher has impressed even recent leaders of unbelief: for Renan has caught something of sympathy with their incomparable charm, for which Christians may forgive him much that is otherwise alien and degrading; and Strauss has been softened almost into recognition. He holds that Jesus applied all these features of meekness, patience, and suffering to Himself, and formed Himself on this wonderful

Recent
leaders of
unbelief
impressed by
the resemblance
of
Jesus to the
picture
drawn by
Isaiah.

¹ Isa. lxi. 1.

model, instead of the warlike and victorious Messiah of popular anticipation; and now, that these oracles—hundreds of years old—even if they pointed only to the better part of a race, should thus at length come true of it, and of one transcendent person in it, who is the Teacher of the world, is not this almost as strange as what a Christian believes?

Of all the predictions claimed for the Messiah the most wonderful are those which bear upon His death. This is a fresh singularity, that, as Christians attach so much importance to this event, the Old Testament should seem here also to concentrate its rays. Jewish tradition is here less copious, though not without striking testimonies; and the offence of the cross, either before or after the Christian period, led to the conception of two Messiahs, the one, the Son of Joseph, who should suffer and die,—the other, the Son of David, who should reign. When the prophecies are now studied in the light of history, much of this darkness is cleared away, and is seen to have lain mostly in the prejudices of Jewish readers. Modern difficulties are largely of the same character, such as objections to the doctrine of atonement, aggravated by the reluctance to admit what, if true, is so visibly supernatural. How far recent German theology has emerged from these struggles may be seen in writers whom no one will charge with “blind orthodoxy.” Thus Riehm says—

Predictions
of Messiah's
death.

Jewish
readers
conceived
two
Messiahs.

Riehm on
the 22nd
Psalm and
on Isaiah
xlii. 2.

"Of this agreement, the most remarkable example is the 22nd Psalm, where the image of the crucified Christ surrounded by His triumphant enemies, comes out unmistakably for every Christian eye."

Delitzsch on
Isaiah liii.
and
Zechariah.

He in the same place also appeals to "the agreement of the picture which the prophecy of the 'Servant of Jehovah' has drawn with that of Christ, in many quite special features."¹ To the same effect Delitzsch, in discussing Isaiah liii. says:—

"Now for the first time the type of sacrifice which was previously dumb, begins to speak through the idea of the Servant of Jehovah. He pours out His soul in death, and His soul thus brings a satisfactory offering, which atones and makes reparation for the sins of the people. He takes the guilt of His people's sins upon Himself. . . . The Servant of Jehovah dies and is buried, but not in order to remain in death, but that He may live eternally as the priestly and royal head of a great congregation."²

Thus also, when he has applied to Christ the two oracles in Zechariah that speak of the pierced One (xii. 10), and of the Fountain opened (xiii. 1), he adds in regard to the smitten Shepherd (xiii. 7),

"The New Testament references (Matt. xxvi. 31, etc. ; Mark xiv. 27) are so far fully justified, as they apply these utterances to Jesus Christ, to His death and its consequences."³

Oehler on
Isaiah liii.

So also Oehler, while granting a starting-point in a collective Israel, says:—

"Chapter liii. [in Isaiah] can only refer to an individual. Hence Ewald, *e.g.*, regards this portion as interpolated from an older book, in which a single martyr was spoken of. For it is

¹ Isaiah xlii. 2 ; 1. 5, etc. ; liii. 2.

² Delitzsch, *Messianic Prophecies*, p. 86. Clark, 1880.

³ *Ibid*, p. 106.

not the heathen who speak, as the utterly erroneous view now so widely disseminated asserts, but the prophet, now in the name of the prophets in general, ver. 1: 'Who hath believed our report?' and now in that of the people, ver. 6: 'All we like sheep have gone astray,' etc. The sense of guilt is so vivid, even in the case of the prophets, who know themselves to be the servants of God, that they include themselves in the sinful mass of the people, for whom an atonement is needed: 'We are all as the unclean,' (comp. lix. 12). Hence a valid intercession for the people cannot proceed from them (lix. 16), nor can even the aggregate of God's servants effect an atonement. On the contrary, it is upon the foundation of its intuition of those witnesses who have suffered in the cause of truth, that prophecy rises to the intuition of One in whom the image of the faithful servant is complete—of One who, not for His own sins, but as the substitute of the people, and for their sins, lays down His life."¹

These testimonies of eminent Christian theologians, trained in somewhat different schools, are interesting: but far more striking, to my mind, is the concession here of Strauss, one of the most important in the course of apologetical literature. It is known that in his early editions of his work from 1835 onward, he denied to Christ any certain knowledge of His own death, or announcement of it to His disciples. But in 1864, his new life of Jesus discloses that on so serious a question he has changed his ground. He avows his belief that Jesus not only announced His own decease, but did so in terms of such oracles as Isaiah liii., which had been the model of His life and doctrine.

Strauss's
concession.

His
position
in 1835.

His change
of ground in
1864.

"As to the calling of the teacher patience is indispensable, as the unwearied instructor must take into account

¹ Oehler. *Theology of the Old Testament*, II. p. 426. Clark, 1875.

ingratitude, and overcome the prejudices of men by long-suffering, as in the history of the Jewish prophets examples were before Him of several who had sealed their fidelity to the religion of Jehovah, as through them proclaimed and defended, by a martyr's death, there thus arose for Him an approximation to those features of the servant of Jehovah, which contained suffering, torture, and cruelties even unto death. It is possible that from the very beginning, Jesus kept closer to the features of the first class, and that He wished to be the Messiah in the sense of the still and patient Teacher; but the more He encountered among the people a want of receptivity and positive resistance, the more that He saw the hatred of the rulers excited against Him, and was convinced of its irreconcilable opposition, the more had He occasion to take up also the strictly suffering features of Isaiah 50th, 52nd, and 53rd, into His Messianic conception, to ponder the examples of earlier prophets, whom He alludes to in Matt. xxiii. 37. and Luke xiii. 33, and elsewhere, expecting like them extreme measures, apprehension, condemnation, and execution, and to prepare His followers for such an issue. That point of view also which led Him to contemplate the devotion of His life as a 'ransom for many' (Matt. xx. 28), His death as a reconciling sacrifice, He could well have appropriated to Himself from Isa. liii., as this view in general lay near the Jewish circle of ideas."¹

Agreement
with
Christian
writers.

Thus for once there is agreement between the Christian writers and the leader of unbelief as to the long antecedence of the oracles, and their historic fulfilment, both in the meaning of the prophet, and the spirit and aim of the Sufferer. It is not necessary to bring in features of suffering from other Scriptures; the broad general outline of that one chapter is unique in history. Nor can it be said that the dwelling on the prophecy and repeating it led to its fulfilment. Christ had no power to secure His own public condemnation and execution

¹ *Neues Leben Jesu*, pp. 223-4.

on ordinary principles. Hence this restrained Strauss so long from admitting that He predicted such a death. But the strength of the Christian position remains, and is confessed. The premises are admitted, of which Christianity is the only conclusion; and the name of Jesus stands written upon the greatest phenomenon (we must not call it miracle) in history.

The strength of the Christian position unshaken.

With regard to the resurrection of the Messiah the light of prophecy is much less distinct and clear. Still, both the twenty-second Psalm and the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, which speak of the Messiah's death, and follow it up by setting forth His life and victory, thereby imply a resurrection. In like manner, the sixteenth Psalm (v. 10), whether we read it in the singular or plural requires a resurrection; for corruption is escaped only by His people, and by Himself, through His rising from the grave. A typical prophecy was here in place—the sign of Jonah, as Christ interpreted it; and though this may not have been understood in its full meaning before the event, it had in it a true inherent light, and is now added to the impressive list of singularities that by a proved correspondence connect at every point the Old Testament with the New. Those who have regarded Jesus as able to learn from the Old Testament His own death, but bound to stop there, or only led to hope for a spiritual life in heaven

The resurrection of Christ implied in the 22nd Psalm and the 53rd of Isaiah, etc.

or a victory of His cause on earth, are incoherent; and the Gospel narratives, which make His views of prophecy embrace both death and resurrection, are at once grander in their scheme and truer in their history.

Prophetic
dates.

One word in regard to the dates in prophecy, that have always been remarked though some are less secure than others. The sceptre was not to depart from Judah; and in the very time when the last trace of self-government was vanishing, the Messiah came. He was to come to the second temple,¹ and make its glory greater than that of the first.² Seventy weeks were to elapse³ from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince, which upon the calculation of a day for a year,⁴ have been plausibly carried down by Dr. Pusey and many others from the edict of Artaxerxes (B.C. 457) to the opening of Christ's ministry. More solid than any of these is the coming of the new kingdom, in Daniel ii. and vii., after four great world-monarchies, which the same writer has, in its Messianic fulfilment, so ably defended against the shifting schemes of recent criticism. Data like these undoubtedly produced a wide-spread expectation of some great kingdom to rise in the East, of which we have evidence in the well-known passages of Josephus, of Tacitus and Suetonius,

Widely
diffused
expectation
of the rise of
a great
kingdom in
the East.

¹ Mal. iii. 1.

² Hag. ii. 7-9.

³ Dan. ix. 24, 25.

⁴ Ezek. iv. 6.

and echoes in the Sibylline books and Fourth Eclogue of Virgil. Even if we had had no other Old Testament indications, the very connexion of this great approaching change with the Jewish people and with Jerusalem would have been a chronological landmark ; since on any fair construction the events could not have happened had Israel already become a wandering multitude, without a territory and a capital, as they have been for eighteen centuries.

II.

IN passing over to the branch of the prophetic argument which treats of Christianity as its subject, Christ Himself is not left behind. It is Christ in His Church, as before in His own person. The prophecies bearing on Christianity may be reduced to three points—its succession to Judaism, its victories, and its failures and corruptions.

Prophecies
relating to
Christianity.

1. The succession of Christianity to Judaism is one of its most interesting features. The relation of type and antitype exists nowhere else among religions. No one can say that any of the forms of paganism is the same analogue of the Gospel as Judaism is ; nor can Judaism be said to be in the same sense an analogue of Mohammedanism, for they stand more nearly on the same level, and the one is a plagiarism from the other. Had Mohammed been able to make out in his system

Its
succession
to Judaism.

Christianity
an advance
on Judaism.

Even on
true Old
Testament
Judaism.

Its limi-
tations and
restraints a
prophecy of
a better
dispensation
to come.

an advance in the line of Christianity, or even of Judaism (as he wished to do), this would have been liker the voice of Providence than anything he had to show. But Christianity in relation to Judaism, as the Christian understands both, is this visibly higher type; while the same thing cannot be said of Judaism after the Jewish Messiah comes, as compared with what it is before. The Jewish Messiah has little to bring of prophecy, and nothing of priesthood; and his kingdom is more external than that of Christianity. Even the true Old Testament Judaism was inferior, with youth, immaturity, and restraint; but still there was a vigorous family likeness. There is thus a real foretoken of something to come—a covenant God, a moral worship, with all its local and ceremonial features, an availing though future propitiation, a high though unrealized practical standard, and a mission to the world yet held in abeyance. Was not this, then, a prophecy of the coming religion, as the lower type in nature is a prophecy of the higher? If another system, or rather the old system under new conditions, has redeemed, as the Epistle to the Hebrews explains, the promise of the Levitical law, given wings to the Decalogue, and bursting its own embankments, diffused its blessings among all nations, shall we not see in these tendencies and capacities the augury of the future? But the Old Testament is not thus a

silent witness: it is a speaking one; and besides the testimony as to the Prophet like unto Moses, there is the great announcement of a better priesthood:¹

The Old Testament announces a better priesthood.

“Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek;” and there is also in Jer. xxxi. 31, the clear assertion of a new and better covenant of which the distinction should be its superiority in spiritual influence as seen in laws written on the heart. Now, can any candid unbeliever deny that this is the superiority of Christianity over Judaism, even in its best state, and much more as depraved by Jewish traditions? Is not then this sublimation and consummation of Judaism the fulfilment of prophecy? And ought it not to be so regarded by all writers—who as almost all Rationalists do—here side with Christ against His Jewish opponents, and concede that relatively to them He has made a great advance in the religion of the world? It is impressive to an unbeliever, but still more to a Jew, who sees his ancient sanctuary in ruin or worse than ruin, and his synagogue in all lands confronted by the Christian Church, which has transferred to itself all his watchwords and memorials, his patriarchs and his kings, his law and his prophets, his altars and his sacrifices, his circumcision and his passover, his Zion, his Jerusalem, his Canaan, and has connected them with

The consummation of Judaism the fulfilment of prophecy.

¹ Psa. cx. 4.

one great Presence which exalts and overshadows all ! Is there not here a great cycle in the spiritual world, and can chance, after it has foretold, also achieve, such revolutions as these ?

The
predicted
spread of
Christianity.

2. The next striking point is the prediction of victories for Christianity in the form not only of development, *but of diffusion and universal prevalence*. How great was the unlikelihood of any fulfilment ? No one can say that the prophecy here comes after the event ; for the prophets feel that they have to contend rather with unbelief in their hearers, and call on the mighty power of Jehovah as alone equal to the extremity.

"I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee and give thee for a covenant of the people, and for a light to the Gentiles." ¹

Its
world-wide
sympathy
and philan-
thropy.

Whence this unwonted faith, even greater than the world-wide sympathy and philanthropy, of which it is the minister ? There is no progress here either in the range of expectation or in its confidence. Both are as wide and strong in the days of Abraham as of the last of the prophets. Many details are supplied and many astonishing figures employed : as that the Jewish temple should be exalted to the top of the mountains, and be the centre of a universal pilgrimage ; ² that wild and savage beasts should be transformed ; ³ that a mighty river should go forth towards the Dead

¹ Isaiah xlii. 6. ² Micah iv. 1 ; Isa. ii. 1. ³ Isa. xi. 6-9

Sea, and heal everything in its course;¹ that a Spirit poured out from heaven should inspire a universal gift of prophecy.² Under these figures such solid realities are conveyed as the utter abolition of idolatry;³ the spread of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea;⁴ the prevalence of a deep holiness;⁵ and the practical enjoyment by nations of righteousness and peace.⁶ These blessings are invariably represented as going forth from the Jewish people to other nations, and again and again from Jerusalem;⁷ and while they are always connected with a new appearance of Jehovah, they are very often specialized as introduced by the Messiah, and also, in signal instances,⁸ traced up to His sufferings and death. How then was this Jewish enthusiasm for the salvation of the world originated in a race in many respects so narrow and limited? How did it survive the damping effect of decay and corruption in their own religion, flourish in exile, and resist the incrustations of local and national sectarianism, till it found a glorious revival in Jesus and His disciples, who were ready to die for its fulfilment, and who actually did begin the fulfilment of it in a wonderful degree. Whence this magnificent ideal of a universal religion totally wanting in

Its achievements.

Whence the origin and persistence of these anticipations?

¹ Ezek. xlvii. 1-12.

³ Isa. ii. 18.

⁵ Zech. xiv. 20.

⁷ Isa. ii. 3; Zech. xiv. 8.

² Joel ii. 28, 29.

⁴ Isa. xi. 9.

⁶ Psal. lxxvii. 12-14.

⁸ Psal. xxii.; Psal. liii.

The
struggles
of the
Christian
Church to
realize the
prophetic
ideal.

Unbelief
cannot
explain the
facts.

Prophetic
anticipations
of
delay and
failure.

paganism, wanting, too, in Mohammedanism, except with dependence on brute force, and concessions to sinful lust which degrade and ruin it. The Christian Church has been struggling, as yet inadequately, for eighteen centuries to realize it; but it fires her warriors still with congenial ardour, and the noblest of them falling in the field, throws the casket which contains it outward into the region which it is yet to conquer. The greater the soul, the more does it, like these martyrs of an illimitable and imperishable faith, "move about in worlds not realized," "weep by the rivers of Babylon," and "favour the dust of Zion," the more does it dwell with their spirits and with His, who from the rejection of the cross looked forth upon a universal empire of truth and love. Is this enthusiasm and the success which has crowned it soluble upon any principles of unbelief, or has unbelief in itself the moral greatness to suggest an answer?

3. The last element of wonder in these prophecies of victory is *the shade of delay, reaction, and corruption that blends with success*. In the prophets it is chiefly, if not exclusively, delay and failure. Far from being moved to write their prophecies, as some have supposed, only as suggested by the march of Assyrian armies, or the last rumours from Egypt or Babylon, or from seeing in the next change of the political horizon the birth-pang of the Messianic age, they rise

through the grandeur of the events described into something of their own tranquillity, and can make their watchwords, "He that believeth shall not make haste."¹ "I the Lord will hasten it in his time."² Hence they can repeat each other's oracles, and form a chain of expectation stretching through many years; and in the great future they can blend with calmness features of disappointment in the reception of the coming salvation, and most of all, the fall of Israel which, as in Isaiah xlix., mysteriously darkens the calling of the Gentiles. They can hardly, indeed, anticipate the corruptions of Christianity; for the prophetic language had hardly lights and shades for the varying features of an Israel beyond Israel. But in the New Testament this generality is resolved; and the strange fortunes of the Gospel itself in history, as made up of triumph and failure, of purity and corruption, of strength and weakness, and that not only in one age, but as more or less cleaving all through to its career, are most strikingly delineated. Broadly there stands out the unbelief of the Jews, and their exclusion from the kingdom, in the utterances of Christ Himself and the apostle Paul; nor can this be regarded as mere natural revenge, for it is announced with the deepest sadness, and a day of repentance is described. The history of the world has followed the one set of

Features
of Old
Testament
prophecy.

New
Testament
anticipations of
the history
of Christianity.

¹ Isaiah xxviii. 16.

² Isaiah lx. 22.

notices, but has not yet overtaken the other ; and how is this foresight so far to be explained ?

Equally striking is the foreshadowing of Christianity in its other miscarriages and reverses.

The
corruptions
of
Christianity
fore-
shadowed in
the New
Testament.

Most of all its corruptions are marvellously pre-indicated. While the great parable of the Sower predicts only a partial success for the divine seed, the two kindred parables of the Tares and of the Net cast into the Sea foretell and cover all depravations of doctrine and inconsistencies of practice. It is still the kingdom of heaven, but of heaven tarnished, degraded, almost buried, by earth. Nothing gives us a higher idea both of the intellectual reach and moral greatness of the Saviour than these parables ! The kingdom of heaven, with all its sad degeneracy, is worth living for and dying for ; and though He comes not to send peace on earth but a sword, He is straitened till His baptism is accomplished. Those who condemn Christianity for its abuses find their objections here foreclosed.

Objections
to
Christianity
anticip-
ated by
its own
prophetic
delinea-
tions.

A religion so candid, so prescient of its sorest wounds in the house of its friends, might disarm even the prejudice of its enemies. The very largeness and sadness of its confessions might propitiate their dislike. It is not an outward foe that Paul describes in Second Thessalonians, but one seated in the temple of God, and rather restrained by outward hindrance, as the Christian writers so generally understood the passage of Roman persecution at

length withdrawn, and opening the way for the Church to generate a worse antichrist from its own bosom. So the antichrist of the Apocalypse, whatever else it may include, cannot exclude the shapes of heresy, pride, and tyranny under Christian names, which, like successive monsters from the abyss have made war upon the Lamb, and delayed the peaceful consummation of His reign. These embroiled, entangled, inextricable scenes, only to be interpreted as they are lived through by a sad but ever brightening experience, how could they have been conceived beforehand by any mortal intelligence? How could they in their grandeur, their terror, their ultimate dramatic unity and outburst of light and praise, be other than the forecastings of One who, above the illusions of superficial strife and sudden victory, suffers the whole unfathomable powers of evil to disclose themselves, that in one all-inclusive conflict they may be defeated and destroyed?

Antichrist.

The prophetic delineations the forecastings of omniscience.

III.

THE third prophetic topic to be noticed is the bearing which prediction has on the history and circumstances of the Jews. I shall speak first of the captivities and dispersions of the Jewish people, and secondly, of the New Testament prophecies of the destruction of Jerusalem.

Prophecies relating to the Jews.

The
captivity
and return
foretold.

The return
contrary
to all
historical
analogies.

The Old
Testament
points
forward to
the present
dispersion of
the Jews.

1. There is, to begin with, not the slightest doubt that Jeremiah, following Micah, who lived a century before, foretold the destruction and captivity in the Chaldean period, and added the notice of a return after seventy years. This is recorded in Jer. xxv. 9-11; and the circumstances are such, that if the delivery of this prophecy be denied, no event in the life of the prophets can be accepted. Now this issue could not have been foreseen by any natural means. The return of a departed people was against all historical analogies, as not only the case of the Ten Tribes showed, but the existing usage on which recent discoveries have thrown so much light, of occupying such conquered lands by an exchange of peoples, that admitted usually of no succeeding break or disturbance. Now the utterance of Jeremiah was fulfilled by the edict of Cyrus (B.C. 536), a fact which is not contested; and all that is required is to suppose that Jeremiah, instead of counting from the last siege and captivity (B.C. 588), counts from the first (B.C. 606), as captivity then really began. It is not desirable to lay undue stress on this incident, however remarkable; and its chief weight lies in bringing into relief the pre-intimations of another and more terrible captivity and dispersion, from which there has been as yet no return. Without bringing in here utterances in the Gospels there is in the Old Testament alone quite enough to point

forward to the present captivity and dispersion of the Jewish people. The leading passages are Leviticus xxvi. and Deuteronomy xxviii., and these if read over to any number of dispassionate hearers, who should then be asked whether they applied better to Israel in Babylon, or to Israel scattered as it has long been throughout the world, would suggest only one interpretation. There is no word more prophetic in all history than this :¹

Predictions
in Leviticus
and Deuteronomy.

“Thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word among all nations, whither the Lord shall lead thee.”

The marvel is increased by the sense of long-continued endurance, which these oracles involve, and also of adherence to their own religion, for though it is foretold that they should serve gods of wood and stone, which has been abundantly fulfilled in their enforced conformities to idolatry or superstitions forbidden by their strict ritual, it is evidently taken for granted that they should still be a nation continuous in their old profession, and should at length by repentance return to favour with their fathers' God. All through the writings of the prophets a wider and longer dispersion seems to be contemplated than was fulfilled in Babylon, and a sorer trial of national vitality ; and thus only a promise like that in Amos ix. 9 acquires significance :

The long-continued
endurance
of the
people.

The
prophetic
writings
contemplate
a wider
than a
Babylonish
captivity.

¹ Deut. xxviii. 37.

The
prophecy of
Amos.

“For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.”

Its sig-
nificance.

Could
unbelief
survive the
restoration
of the
Jews to
Palestine?

The centrifugal force of world-wide dispersion, with the centripetal of national cohesion, could not have been more distinctly expressed. It is not the calamity of national downfall, of expatriation and wandering to the ends of the earth, of proscription and outrage such as may well make Christians blush, even when it still breaks out in our own century; it is not even the tragic cause, as Christians believe, of this unmatched disaster, and which weighs like a doom not finally exhausted. It is the power of resistance—the invincible reaction against all forces of change or dissolution,—the stubborn identity with his fathers, which from the heights of modern commerce or the fair equality of intellectual and political conflict, as from the depression of other days, makes the Jew still retire into solitude, to nurse a sad memory or a hope yet unfulfilled. Were the Jews converted, and were Palestine restored to them, would unbelief be able to hold its own? What would unbelief have said, had they been converted as easily as the Franks or the Saxons? or had Palestine been for long centuries the peaceful seat of an unconverted Hebrew people, to whom the Roman conquest had been nothing more than the exile in Babylon? We should then have heard enough

of the argument from prophecy on the other side, and should have had reason to fear, as we have not now, for the truth and the success of the Gospel of Christ.

2. With respect to the second chief point bearing on the Jews—the alleged prophecies by Jesus of the destruction of Jerusalem, as preserved in the first three Gospels—it must indeed be frankly granted that we have not the unanimous accordance by critics of every school, Christian and non-Christian, as to the existence of these Gospels previous to the year (A.D. 70) when Jerusalem was taken. But we have what may be called a great revolution in criticism going on, from the days of Strauss, who would not allow that we had clear evidence of the existence of any of the Synoptists till the middle of the second century, down to our own time, when leaders of negative opinion bring up at least one of the Gospels before the Jewish catastrophe. Thus Hilgenfeld brings up Matthew (in its supposed Hebrew form), and Keim (in its Greek); while Hitzig before them had done the same for Mark. A critic so thoroughly unfettered by tradition—though not negative—as Bernhard Weiss, places Mark in 69; yet one can easily see how hard it is, even for great scholars who disbelieve in the supernatural, to grant the earlier date, since a real prophecy springs at once into view. The conduct of Strauss here presents

The
destruction
of Jeru-
salem.

A revolution
in criticism
going on.

The dates of
the Gospels
according to
various
critics

Strauss's
changes of
position.

one of his remarkable vacillations. Though anxious to place Matthew so late, he is constrained in his first editions to grant that Jesus may have uttered the words ascribed to Him, drawn from Jewish tradition, as to some overthrow of the temple, and helped perhaps by Daniel ix. 26, 27. He argues against their being put into His mouth after the event; for then Matthew would not have added (xxiv. 29) that the speaker announced Himself as coming "immediately" in the clouds: since this the event had falsified. On reflection, Strauss seems to have thought that even this was a less difficulty than to grant the reality of the utterance, which made Jesus and Daniel too like prophets, and Matthew too like an early historian. Hence in his new Life of Jesus he comes down to the grosser theory of a prophecy so minute and elaborate being an *ex post facto* creation. No other scheme remains, unless we hold with Renan that Jesus, speaking of the temple buildings—

Renan's
theory.

"Divined" that they would have a short duration;"¹

and at the same time, that such words were "lent" to Him by the Evangelists.

But if we must fall back on prophecy after the event, and prophecy so extended, so terrible in its details, so startlingly coincident in its most awful features, as Strauss grants, with Josephus and

¹ *Vie de Jésus*, p. 211, and p. 273, note.

contemporary history, then what are we to think of the honesty or intelligence of the Evangelists, who could put all this into the mouth of Christ? Macaulay wrote the "Prophecy of Capys," but he only put it into his *Lays of Ancient Rome*, and not into a Roman history; so that the Gospels sink into lays, if not into frauds. This is opposed to the whole evidence of their historic character, and also to the fact that in the very passages in question they go far beyond the fall of Jerusalem, to its long-continued desolation and treading down by the Gentiles, which could not then be suggested by the event. Unquestionably Christ elsewhere anticipates a longer career for the victories and trials of His gospel; and in these very oracles the so-called "times of the Gentiles," which had to be "fulfilled," cannot be limited to one generation, and that the generation which (as in Matt. xvi. 28; Luke xxi. 35) had enjoyed His own presence.

The honesty and intelligence of the evangelists on the principles of negative criticism.

Christ's anticipations of the victories and trials of His Gospel.

IV.

THE fourth and last head of prophecy is that bearing upon the other nations of the world. The mere predictive aspect of these manifold notices is not that which is chiefly regarded. The main design is to show that the Gentiles are also amenable to moral government, with its laws and retributions, and that a place is preparing for them in the Messianic kingdom, which could only be theirs

The nations of the world.

through the downfall of pride and the turning from idolatry. Some specimens only of prediction from this wide field are selected. If prophecy has here failed to predict, it is the most splendid failure in all history.

To begin with the notice of Ishmael in Gen. xvi. 12:—

Ishmael.

“And he will be a wild man [literally, a man like the wild-ass of the desert]: his hand will be against every man, and every man’s hand against him: and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.”

The Arab
people.

No picture could be more complete of the wild liberty and defiant, untameable independence of the Arab people to this day. Nor will their descent from Abraham’s son be denied, which is their own cherished belief, whatever of other and kindred blood, and even of alien, may have mingled with theirs, to form the “great nation” predicted in Genesis xvii. 20, and which has so moulded the history of the world. That this people who have written their name, though in a spurious copy, beside Judaism and Christianity, on the monotheistic faith of the world, should have such a notice and prefiguration in the history of Abraham is to say the least singular; and while predictions of great non-Christian writers as to Mohammedanism are now being falsified, the features of the Arab race that framed it, and left even their weakness upon it, stand in the Bible as sharp as ever.

It is no great transition to pass from Ishmael to Egypt, linked through Hagar with Arabia, and itself coming in the Old Testament as early on the scene. Very little of Isaiah, Jeremiah, or Ezekiel, bearing on Egypt has been challenged, though accounted for by political sagacity, moral foreboding founded on experience, or where these fail, remodelling after the event. The unexpected results of Assyrian exploration, even more than of Egyptian, has confirmed the accuracy of the prophetic record. The sagacity of Gesenius—rationalist though he was—kept him from contesting the conquest of Ashdod by Sargon,¹ though that monarch never appears outside the Bible; and now the full inscription, involving also the connexion with Egypt, is recovered. So likewise the conquest of No (Thebes) in Nahum iii. 8–10, is in every point verified, and all the perplexities which had led this to be regarded as an interpolation, are at an end.² These verifications also support a fulfilment of Ezekiel xxix. 8–12, regarding a desolation of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar for forty years. Though we have as yet no mention of this, the humiliations of Egypt by Assyria in the two foregoing cases at so much earlier a date remove the difficulty, and lead us to appreciate at its worth the remark of Mr. F. W. Newman :

¹ Isaiah xx.

² Schrader, *Keilinschriften*, p. 398–9, 2nd Edition. For No (Thebes), p. 450.

Egypt.

The results
of
Assyrian
explor-
ations.

“Happily the grasp of the Chaldean was more limited than human imagination.”¹

It is in the same chapter of Ezekiel that what is here called his “human imagination” enabled Ezekiel to draw so wonderful a picture of the debasement of Egypt, which, notwithstanding the transient splendours of the Ptolemies, remains so true to this day:—

“It shall be the basest of the kingdoms; neither shall it exalt itself any more above the nations: for I will diminish them, that they shall no more rule over the nations.”²

The kings of
the South
in Daniel.

Porphyry's
explanation.

Other
prophecies.

In connexion with the Ptolemies, we have the series in Daniel xi. respecting their relations as kings of the south, with the Syrian monarchs as kings of the north, which Porphyry—the greatest antagonist of Christianity in the third century, found so accurate, that he could only explain it as written after the event.

There are notices even in Hosea of the Assyrian captivity;³ and the great prophecies of Isaiah respecting the deliverance of Jerusalem in his day, received, as all admit, remarkable accomplishment. Even Sennacherib on the Taylor cylinder does not claim to have taken Jerusalem; and we can read between the lines his own defeat. The final downfall of Nineveh is wonderfully foreshadowed in Nahum iii., where he compares it to the capture

¹ *Hebrew Monarchy*, p. 326.

² Ezek. xxix. 15.

³ Hosea x. 6; xi. 5.

of Thebes, indicating the action of fire, which all the Ninevite remains so illustrate.

Nahum and
Zephaniah
on Nineveh.

Even more distinct as to a final desolation is Zephaniah ii. 15:—

“This is the rejoicing city that dwelt carelessly, that said in her heart, I am, and there is none beside me : how is she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in ! every one that passeth by her shall hiss and wag his hand.”

The dreary solitude of the mounds from which such precious treasures have been dug could not have been more terribly expressed. Yet these words of Nahum were written about B.C. 660, when the reign of Asurbanipal was at its zenith ; and those of Zephaniah, who is generally placed some thirty years later, could not possibly be suggested by any long-continued overthrow.

Of the references to Babylon in the prophets, it is necessary to select only those bearing on its downfall and ruin. Even Gesenius allows here a natural meaning,¹ but, as he honestly admits, that he cannot believe in an Isaiah writing this more than a century and a half before, and thus is shut up to a second Isaiah, this gives no solution ; for how could this Isaiah, even if living in Babylon, know beforehand that the city was to fall or what was to be the manner of its capture ? Still less could he know that Cyrus was to restore Jerusalem its temple ? Thus we come back to our universal

The down-
fall and
ruin of
Babylon.

¹ *Jesaja* III. 33 ; III. 88.

Gesenius.

remedy, prophecy after the event: and yet how can this help us as to the desolations of Babylon, continued as they are to this day? Gesenius refuses here, as generally, the more extreme rationalistic consequence of fictitious prophecy, satisfying himself with portents on the horizon; but what horizon in the sixth century before Christ could suggest this; and ought there not to be a third Isaiah (almost like the wandering Jew) who may receive the fatherhood of it many centuries later? Mr. Newman grants that this is one of a series of prophecies against Babylon, which have received either a most accurate or a very plausible fulfilment.¹ He seeks, however, to weaken the argument by saying,—

F. W.
Newman.

“That it is absurd to represent the emptiness of *modern* Babylon as a punishment for the pride of Nebuchadnezzar.”

This, however, is a new style of theology, unless we hold that all sin is punished only in those who commit it: for if the next generation may suffer from a Nebuchadnezzar or a Napoleon, why not a more remote one, and is sin ever exhausted?

Tyre.

Another set of monumental prophecies against pride, luxury, and impiety, is the grand series against Tyre, begun in Isaiah and ended in Ezekiel. The doom in Ezekiel xxvi., that Tyre should be “a place to spread nets upon,” has, as travellers attest, been literally fulfilled. No great emporium

¹ *Hebrew Monarchy*, p. 315.

has ever had such an elegy; and its echo survives in one of the sublimest chapters of the Apocalypse. (xviii.) As an example of prophecies said to have failed may be mentioned Damascus, of which it is said in Isaiah xvii. 1 :—

“It is taken away from being a city, and it shall be a ruinous heap.”

But this is explicable by a temporary desolation such as was actually inflicted by Tiglath-pileser on the Syrian capital. We should have known what to think had prophecy attached all its curses to cities as continuously flourishing to this day as Damascus, or had Nineveh, Babylon, and Tyre been still, in spite of it, the centres of worldly greatness. But these shafts do not fly at random. Unlike the Homeric arrows in not being due to mere anger, their clang is terrible, and they fix their mark in decay and ruin.

In closing this Tract, one or two conclusions may now be suggested as flowing from the consideration of this evidence in all its parts.

1. *These alleged prophecies want the characteristics of such as are confessedly human.* They are not trivial or connected with ordinary human interests. They are not mere divinations, designed to amuse, to startle, or to gratify curious prying into the future. They are not Delphic or studiously am-

Character-
istics of the
prophecies.

biguous; for whatever of obscurity be in them, they bear the stamp of sincerity, and many of them are cheeringly, as others alarmingly, straightforward. They are not connected with any caste pursuing class interests; for though the prophets are a body and succession, their unity is chiefly in suffering; and while their oracles awake to bright hopes, they call themselves to stern duties.

Inadequate
explanations.
Prophecy
after the
event.

2. *Ordinary explanations are inadequate.* Prophecy after the event is so. It is discredited by the best rationalists. The act or habit is degrading to men who are still looked on as the moral instructors of the world. Anything like it would not be tolerated in the journalist, the historian, the ethical teacher of modern times, and only in the poet with understanding of his licence. Nor is coincidence pure and simple, an adequate cause. This has been seen to be so frequent, so startling, so like to design, that the argument from design applies; and design here involves knowledge more than mortal. Nor, once more, can sagacious forecast of moral order suffice. This is the most respectable solution short of inspiration. But it quite breaks down. What brooding on moral order could attain to such prophetic results? How could Abraham thus know that his call would bless all nations; or David that the Messiah should spring from him; or the prophets that particular kingdoms and cities should be

Coincidence.

Forecasts of
moral order.

destroyed; or Christ that His religion should fail with the Jews, and succeed with the Gentiles? The evidence must be taken in detail; and when it is seen how often the sense of insufficiency returns, this is the mark of a solution radically weak and abortive.

3. *The Christian view of prophecy not only accounts for the individual facts, but for the whole.* Prophecy

is systematic, progressive, and all-inclusive. The theory of a revelation of redemption accounts for these features. Christ is then the centre; and hence all is connected in Him; and at the same time the Messianic part of revelation is largest, most important, most like the heart in the economy of the whole. This accounts also for the progress that we have seen, a progress in all directions and towards all issues, but all conditioned by the approach of Christ, and by the fulness of the disclosure as to His person and work and its consequences. And this accounts for the all-inclusive character of the predictions. The Gentile future must stand in the light of the Jewish past, and be indebted to it. The Jewish unbelief must serve as a foil to the Gentile faith, and be at length reconciled to it and one with it. The world's kingdoms must go through their crises of trial and judgment, to prepare the world as a whole for the Heavenly King. Thus, with prophecy, there is a

The
Christian
explanation
alone
adequate

It accounts
for all the
features of
prophecy.

The
Christian's
duty to give
heed to the
sure word
of prophecy.

Redeemer, and with Him a philosophy of history leading upwards; without prophecy, no redemption, but law and sin fastened down by it, and any streaks in the darkness like a prophetic glimmer, due to no rising orb, but meteoric, and born of chaos or night. Ought not the Christian then to give heed to this "sure word," which is attested, as it is created, by a power above nature just where it needs to be; and may he not hope as he prays, that to others also this day may dawn, and this day-star arise.



THE ORIGIN
OF THE
HEBREW RELIGION.

AN INQUIRY AND AN ARGUMENT.

✓ BY
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THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY:
56, PATERNOSTER ROW; 65, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD; AND
164, PICCADILLY.

Argument of the Tract.

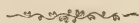
WHAT rational explanation can be given of the Religion of Ancient Israel? Characteristic features of the religion of the Old Testament Scriptures. 1. Alliance of RELIGION with HISTORY. 2. Organic UNITY. 3. DEVELOPMENT. Critical objections. Evidence against authenticity of the books, *negative*; in favour, *positive*.

I. Bible starts not with dogma, but HISTORY. Yet its whole purpose religious: a history, not of human affairs with supernatural episodes, but of God's dealings with mankind. Peculiarity of the history: annals of *one family line*, from Adam to Christ. Distinguish between "substantial truth" and infallibility or inspiration. Literary merit of Genesis. View of human life. Faith, prayer, providence. Unique character of Hebrew national life. Contrast between Genesis and subsequent books of Moses. 1. MIRACLES. Origin of Religion. Professor Max Müller's view. Modern repugnance to miracles. Hence rejection of Mosaic authorship of Pentateuch. Science and miracle. Another form of objection. Adequate purpose of miracles recorded by Moses. 2. RELIGIOUS CEREMONIAL, including, (a) a Sanctuary; (b) Sacrifice; (c) Priesthood. (a) The Tabernacle; symbol of Divine Presence. (b) Priesthood; contrast with that of Egypt. (c) Sacrifices. Ewald's erroneous assertion. Contrast with pagan rites. Mutual connection of the religion and the history. Enormous improbability involved in hypotheses of modern destructive criticism.

II. UNITY and DEVELOPMENT. Nature of unity discoverable in Bible. Must have adequate cause. Fundamental religious idea: Being and Character of God. Creation. Man in moral relation to his Maker. Divine authority and mercy. Contrast with heathen literature. Divine attributes of 'RIGHTEOUSNESS' and 'HOLINESS.' Transference of this latter idea to God. Hebrew idea of holiness not ceremonial, but moral. Hebrew view of SIN. Human interest of Old Testament Scriptures; yet pervaded with underlying thought of man's sin and sinfulness. Hebrew terms. Conception of sin moral, not ceremonial. Central idea which gives unity to religious teaching of Old Testament. Purity. Tenderness. Needless to discuss the view which ranks the Hebrew with pagan religions, since our whole inquiry refutes it. Science is bound to study and give account of phenomena so abundant and significant. Absurdity of hypothesis that the national genius of the Hebrews produced their national religion. The crucial test. The UNIVERSAL RELIGION.

THE ORIGIN OF THE HEBREW RELIGION.

AN INQUIRY AND AN ARGUMENT.



HAT rational explanation, satisfactory to a thoughtful and candid mind, can be given of the religion of ancient Israel, as exhibited in the Old Testament

What
rational ex-
planation
can be given
of the
religion of
ancient
Israel

Scriptures? Are its existence and character explicable by the same causes which have produced the other ancient religions of the world? We may here leave out of view the question whether in fact those religions sprang simply from the working of the human mind, or had a common root in primeval revelation. Let us take them as we find them in the most ancient records. Would it be a rational theory of the religion of ancient Israel to say that it originally resembled the religions of Assyria and Egypt, Phœnicia and Greece; but that these religions were somehow arrested in their development, whereas the religion of Israel reached by gradual development that form and force which place it in such stern but splendid

Is gradual
development
a sufficient
explanation?

What is the secret of the supposed development?

contrast with the other faiths of mankind? If so, what was the secret of this unique development? How came it to pass that a small and despised nation, destitute of philosophy and of art, whose literature outside its sacred books has left no mark on human thought, whose history was a series of failures, culminating in the most tremendous overthrow that ever crushed and broke up a people, should have succeeded, where India, China, Egypt, Greece, Rome, all failed? How is it that Judæa has produced in Christianity, which claims to be simply the perfect flower and ripe fruit of Judaism, the one religion which has both the ambition and the prospect of conquering the world, and furnishing the supreme bond of unity for the human race?

These are questions which claim the attention of the thoughtful sceptic as much as of the Christian believer. He cannot afford to put them lightly by. For doubt ceases to be "honest doubt" if it trifles with evidence. The only sceptic who merits either respect or sympathy is he whose "open eyes desire the truth."

The unique place in literature of the Old Testament Scriptures.

Whatever view we adopt of the origin or of the teaching of the Old Testament Scriptures, we must admit that they hold a unique place in literature. The translation into English, by eminent scholars, of "the Sacred Books of the East," enables the English reader to compare and contrast the Hebrew Scriptures with all other sacred writings in their

structure and contents, as well as in their influence on human thought and history.

Three characteristic features may be named as deserving special consideration: the manner in which the Hebrew Scriptures connect religion with history; their organic unity, doctrinal and historical; and their progressive development of religious teaching.¹

Three
characteris-
tic features.

What do you mean, it may be asked, by speaking of *unity* and *development* in the Old Testament Scriptures? Do you mean to assume the authenticity of the several books, and that their assigned dates correspond with the real order in which they were produced? These are the very points on which 'the most advanced modern criticism' claims to have passed its sentence, and overset the faith of ages. Of course. But it will not do for modern criticism, while denying the infallibility of the Bible, to claim infallibility for its own conclusions. They too must be criticised. No doubt there are points of minute scholarship in Hebrew as in other ancient languages, where the judgment of an expert is entitled to very great respect. Yet even here, when the point is such as can be made plain to an English reader, common sense may put in a claim to a vote. But such

What is
meant by
unity and
development
in the Old
Testament
Scriptures?

The claims
of common
sense.

¹ Other characteristics are treated with consummate force and beauty in Henry Rogers' Lectures on "*The Superhuman Origin of the Bible.*"

capital questions as whether the Pentateuch was really written by Moses, or is a tissue of forgeries and fragments compiled a thousand years after his death, do not hang on such elaborate niceties. They must be weighed in bigger scales than those in which critics weigh vowel points and various readings. They turn on broad and solid considerations, as to which every thoughtful and educated English reader may qualify himself to form a competent judgment.

The account the Scriptures give of themselves.

The indirect character of counter arguments.

The account these ancient documents give of themselves has at all events a presumption in its favour, until evidence be produced to prove them unauthentic or spurious. Positive evidence against them there is none, and in the nature of the case can be none, unless a rival history of equal or greater antiquity could be discovered. The arguments against their veracity and antiquity are all indirect, of the nature of objections. On the other hand, the evidence in favour of the immemorial tradition of the Hebrew nation as to their authorship is positive, and of immense value; consisting in the structure and the contents of the books themselves. Add to this the impossibility of giving any satisfactory account of them if they be forgeries.

The candid sceptic may say, that having weighed fairly both the evidence and the objections, the latter appear to him to preponderate. But he must

not treat the evidence as non-existent. And it is a sound rule of both common sense and criticism, that when positive evidence is conclusive, even insoluble difficulties cannot overthrow it.

Two other considerations deserve to be borne in mind. First, that supposing the books of the Old Testament to be genuine, any dislocation of their real historical order (such as the conjecture that portions of the Pentateuch were written by Ezekiel or by Ezra) must altogether confuse and disguise their religious teaching. Secondly, that if these books, taken in their traditional order, exhibit a unity and progress which disappear on any other arrangement, a powerful argument will be supplied that the traditional order is the true order. If the pieces of a model fitted in one order produce a symmetrical building, and in any other arrangement a shapeless heap, no sane mind doubts which of these shows the design with which they were fashioned.

The religious teaching confused by dislocation of the historical order.

The unity and progress of the traditional order an argument for its truth.

Guided by these plain principles let us examine those characteristics of the Hebrew Scriptures above indicated ; viz., the VITAL CONNECTION they present between RELIGION AND HISTORY ; the unity of thought, sentiment, and practical aim underlying their great variety of form ; and the PROGRESSIVE DEVELOPMENT of religious doctrine which they display,—not final, but pointing forward to a fuller unfolding.

I.

The Bible
begins with
history.

THE Bible begins not with dogma, but with history. It says nothing of the being and attributes of God, but shows the Creator at work.

“In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth.”

Its aim is
religious.

It says nothing of religion, but shows the ancestors of mankind created in the image of God, and placed at the outset in moral relations of obedience and responsibility to their Creator. This is its method throughout. It gives us no religious teaching apart from particular persons, places, and events. Even the law of the Ten Commandments, the most perfect summary of moral and religious duty extant before Christianity, is recorded as matter of historical fact—uttered by a Divine Voice to the assembled people of Israel, and afterwards graven on stone tablets “with the finger of God.” Yet it is impossible thoughtfully to study these writings without perceiving that their whole aim and meaning is religious. The story they tell is not that of human affairs, with a mingling of the supernatural, but of God’s dealings with men. Even those painful and revolting episodes which a historian anxious for the honour of his race would gladly have omitted, are found on this view to have their place and meaning.

Another peculiar feature of the early portion of

these records is, that they take the form of family annals. In Genesis iv. a fragment is given, tracing the line of primogeniture for six generations. But in chap. v. a new departure is indicated by the title "*The book of the generations of Adam*;" and the line is traced from Seth to Noah. In chap. x. we have "*The generations of the sons of Noah*," the family tree of nations. In chap. xi. "*The generations* (or genealogic record) *of Shem*," traces the line to Abraham. It has often been erroneously supposed that this is a list of eldest sons. Abraham himself, like Shem, was a younger son. Abraham's line divides in the twin sons of Isaac; but it is not till after the death of Isaac that the family records take a new start; chap. xxxvi. giving "*The generations of Esau, who is Edom*;"¹ and chap. xxxvii. introducing the history of Joseph with the words "*These are the generations of Jacob*." After this, there is no further break. The family of Jacob gradually develops into the twelve tribes which constituted the nation of the "*B'ney Israel*," Children of Israel. What makes this genealogical character of Old Testament history the more noteworthy is, that in the New Testament Scriptures

The early Scriptures are family annals.

¹ The discussions which have been raised on vers. 31, etc., do not concern us here. See, *e.g.*, the *Speaker's Comm.* on this chapter. Supposing it can be shown that these verses were added by a later pen, this no more affects the integrity and authenticity of Genesis than our modern practice of making additions to ancient books in the form of notes affects the authority of such books.

These old
genealogies
the starting
point of
Christianity.

A continuous chain
of Divine manifesta-
tion re-
presented
by Old and
New
Testament
along a
single line
of human
life.

The fact
unique and
inexplicable
on any
theory but
the reality
of the
Divine
manifesta-
tion and the
substantial
truth of the
history.

it is taken as the starting point of Christianity. In the first and third Gospels, the line of Abraham, Israel, Judah, David, is traced down to Him whom St. Paul calls "the second Adam." With Him the record stops, never to interest mankind further.

Along this single line of human life, claiming to connect the life of the first human being with the times of the Roman Empire, the Hebrew Scriptures, followed by the Christian Scriptures, represent an equally continuous chain of Divine manifestation and Divine dealing as having been carried on, assuming for some fifteen centuries a national form; yet from first to last designed for the benefit of all nations of mankind.

Nothing parallel to this is to be discovered in the whole domain of human literature, or of human religion beside. It must have a meaning and an explanation. And the more deeply it is studied, the more difficult I believe it will be found to invent any explanation other than the reality of the Divine manifestation, and the substantial truth of the history. If Moses was the writer of Genesis, we can well understand how he may have been able to collect and arrange the sacred traditions of his forefathers, together with those which may have been preserved in the family of the "Priests of Midian," amongst whom he spent forty years of his long life. But if Moses' authorship be denied, and the Pentateuch supposed a compilation

of late date by various hands, its form, style, contents, and religious teaching furnish an insoluble problem.

I have spoken of "*the substantial truth* of the history," because we must not here assume any theory of inspiration or infallibility. It is quite possible to believe that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, and wrote in perfect good faith, and yet to suppose that he had no means of discriminating historic fact from legendary fiction in the annals of his forefathers. He wrote (it may be argued) what he believed to be true; but criticism is to be applied to test the actual truth of his narrative.

No theory of inspiration assumed.

Take for example the account of the Creation. To some readers the employment of the word "day" appears so irreconcilable with the facts of geology as hopelessly to shut out the notion of Divine inspiration. To others, on the contrary, no less thoughtful and competent, the general agreement of that marvellously terse record with the history of life graven in the rocks, is nothing short of a miracle of knowledge, utterly beyond the reach of the unaided human mind in that remote age, or indeed in any age previous to our own.

Difficulties felt with reference to inspiration.

Again, the long term of life ascribed to the antediluvian patriarchs, and to their descendants down to Abraham (and even later), appears to some critics self-evidently fabulous. To others, the present brevity of human life, and the rapid

decay of the bodily organs, appear perplexing and mysterious; and it seems to them inherently probable that the early generations of mankind, nearer the fountain of life, possessed a far larger share of vital power, involving a capacity no longer possessed of renewing tissues and organs during many centuries.

A paradoxical opinion, that the early narratives of Genesis are Divinely inspired myths.

The religious teaching of Genesis unaffected by the judgment formed on such points.

The paradoxical opinion has even been maintained, with great ability and with undoubted sincerity, that the early narratives of Genesis are mythical legends, but are nevertheless divinely inspired. To those who bow with unreserved faith to the teaching of our Lord and His apostles, the testimony of the New Testament to the historical truth of those narratives, seems sufficient and decisive. But at whatever judgment the reader arrives on these and the like points (or even if he holds his judgment in suspense), the religious teaching of Genesis—the general view of Divine manifestation to man and dealing with man—abides the same, and demands to be considered and accounted for.

The wonderful simplicity and terseness of the Book of Genesis probably conceal from the multitude of readers its transcendent literary merit. The story of Joseph is perhaps the finest example of narrative in literature; while the speech of Judah is an unsurpassed model of natural eloquence. The story of the mission of Abraham's servant to

Mesopotamia is equally perfect in its way ; but its fulness of detail—the *scale* of the narrative—has no parallel in Scripture. Had the Bible narratives in general been given on a similar scale of detail, the bulk of the Scriptures would have been increased manifold.

The feature of Old Testament religion we have been considering, is not peculiar to Genesis or to the Pentateuch. It pervades the Hebrew Scriptures. It is not that *History is made the medium of religious instruction*. That would be a most narrow and mistaken view of the matter. It is that Religion is shown as the soul of history ; the supreme reality and central power in human affairs ; the deepest foundation of human life. But while this key-note rings loud and clear throughout the Bible, it is struck in Genesis with unsurpassed boldness and truth. God is shown as the ultimate source of all being, preparing the earth from the beginning to be the home of man. Man's very existence is traced to God's purpose to realize His own likeness in human nature. Man is shown as conversant with God, as soon as he began to know himself and the world around him. The foundations of marriage, property, labour, moral duty and responsibility, are all laid in God's revealed will, and man's conscious relation to his Maker. Moral evil, or sin, is represented as wilful disobedience to the

Religion
the soul of
the history
in the
Hebrew
Scriptures.

Specially so
in the
Book of
Genesis.

God's
relation to
the earth,
man,
society,
moral evil.

Human
life as a
whole.

Faith.

Prayer.

Providence.

known will of God. The tendency to evil is shown to be hereditary as well as personal; and teeming with seeds of increase. Human life is regarded as a whole; and God is seen as the Ruler and Judge of Mankind, as well as the personal Friend and Saviour of every one who fears and trusts Him. FAITH, as the mainspring and sheet anchor of the religious life; PRAYER, as direct personal converse with the Unseen Father of spirits, and as actually heard and answered by Him; and DIVINE PROVIDENCE as regulating all human affairs from the greatest to the least, are so exemplified in these ancient Hebrew annals, that the story of Abraham, of Jacob, of Joseph, possesses an undecaying charm for Christian minds of the highest spiritual culture. They are typical for all time. No example of after ages has been able to cast them into the shade.

No break of
continuity
in the
Pentateuch.

The story
of the
deliverance.

The "Pentateuch" is so called because, from time immemorial, perhaps by the author himself, it has been divided into five sections or "books." But there is no break of continuity. The narrative passes briefly over the centuries, at first of peaceful prosperity, then of bitter adversity, during which Israel's descendants "increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty." It hastens to tell the story of the deliverance from bondage, and of the creation of an organised nation out of the twelve clans which claimed Joseph and

his brothers as their ancestors. But it links on this history with the story of Joseph, by his remarkable bequest concerning his embalmed remains; which bequest we are assured was reverently obeyed on the departure of Israel from Egypt, and finally carried out after more than forty years in the Promised Land (Ex. xiii. 19; Josh. xxiv. 32).

Linked with the history of Joseph.

With the narrative of the Exodus, the forty years in the wilderness, and the conquest of Canaan, is interwoven the record of the National Code and Constitution, political, religious, moral, and social. The historic reality of the Divine manifestation to Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, is assumed as the necessary starting-point of God's dealings with their descendants. His promise to Abraham is treated as a 'covenant,' to which Divine faithfulness stands irrevocably pledged. But a new starting point is given immediately after the deliverance, by a fresh 'covenant' granted by Jehovah, and freely accepted by the people.

The National Code and Constitution.

The Divine manifestation to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob the starting point of God's dealings with their descendants.

A fresh covenant.

"Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself. Now therefore if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is mine; and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. . . And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and

laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him. And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD." (Ex. xix. 3-8.)

Such a record has no parallel, in fact or fiction. Many law-givers have claimed Divine authority. Many sacred books have been accounted Divinely inspired. Many nations have deemed themselves patronised by a national deity, and favourites of heaven. But this description of the founding of a nation, and laying the basis of national legislation, by a solemn contract of sovereignty and obedience between the Almighty Creator and the representatives of the whole nation, is absolutely unique in its sober majesty, severe literal reality, and moral grandeur.

The description of the founding of the nation absolutely unique.

On the basis thus laid, the whole fabric of legislation and framework of national life, according to the books of Moses, rested. All the subsequent history proceeds from this starting point. The religion of personal faith, prayer, and obedience, depicted in Genesis, is never lost sight of; but it is overshadowed by the religion of national faith, public worship, and obedience to the law binding on the nation. The Ten Commandments, and the subsequent laws given by Moses, are expressed in such a form that the word "Thou" may apply equally to the individual Israelite or to the nation. Divine providence and government are illustrated on a corresponding scale. The wanderings of

The whole fabric of national life rested on this Divinely laid basis.

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the sufferings and glory of Joseph, illustrate God's care and control of PERSONAL history down to its least details. Egypt, the Red Sea, Sinai, the desert, the manna, the water from the rock, the pillar of cloud and fire, teach a like lesson in regard to NATIONAL history, on a scale never equalled, never to be repeated.

The religious teaching of the remaining four books of Moses stands therefore in vivid contrast with that of Genesis, especially in two of their most striking features: a stupendous series of MIRACLES, and an elaborate RELIGIOUS CEREMONIAL involving a hereditary priesthood.

1. Two unparalleled MIRACLES are recorded in Genesis: the Deluge, and the Destruction of Sodom and its neighbour cities. These excepted, miracles occupy no prominent place, save in the form of those Divine communications, by voices, visions, angelic apparitions, and the like, which were indispensable in the absence of any written revelation, if man was to converse with his Maker, and learn His will.

The two great miracles in Genesis.

The origin, not simply of the Hebrew religion, but of religion itself, as a prominent fact of human nature and history, has been debated as a riddle yet needing solution. The Bible account of the ORIGIN OF RELIGION is that man began his journey on this globe not as a deserted orphan, turned

The origin of religion.

The Bible account.

adrift to seek God as best he could, but in communion with the Father of spirits. God talked with him, and he could talk with God. God marked for him the path of duty, and it lay in his choice to walk in it, or to wander from it. If men ceased to know God, it was by their own neglect and sin; because, as St. Paul says—"They refused to have God in their knowledge."¹

According to Max Müller, the concept of the Divine must come before Divinity can be predicated of this or that.

This view of a primeval revelation is strongly combated, even by writers who hold that religion is natural and indispensable to man. Professor Max Müller, in his extremely able and fascinating *Lectures on the Origin and Science of Religion*, speaks even with contempt of the belief that religion originated in Divine revelation. It is, he argues, an absurdity.

"When man has once arrived at a stage of thought when he can call anything, be it one or many, God, he has achieved more than half his journey. He has found the predicate God, and he has henceforth to look for the subjects only to which that predicate is truly applicable. What we want to know is, how man first arrived at the concept of the divine, and out of what elements he framed it; afterwards only comes the question, how he was able to predicate the divine of this or that, of the one or of the many."²

By parity of reasoning it ought to be impossible for a child to know its mother until it has "found the predicate," or "framed the concept," 'Mother.'

¹ Rom. i. 28, R.V.

² *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion*, page 642. Ed. 1882.

Afterwards only ought to come the question to whom that predicate is applicable, and whether he has many mothers or only one. The fact, as everybody knows, is the other way. A predicate implies language. A concept implies power to abstract and generalize: it is a *generalized judgment*, or group or series of judgments, applicable in virtue of a common name to several objects. None but a mother fully knows all that the predicate or concept "mother" stands for. But long before the cradled child can perform any such intellectual feats as abstraction and generalization—not only before he can talk, but before he suspects that there is such a thing as speech, he is perfectly conscious of his mother's presence and love. Feeling awakes while reason yet slumbers, and opens the door to knowledge. The infant born blind, to whom its mother is an invisible presence, acquires the same emotions, the same certainty, through the sensations of hearing and touch. The nascent intelligence instinctively penetrates behind the veil of sensation into the world of spirit.

Contrary to analogy.

Precisely similar, according to the account in Genesis, was the method by which the Eternal Father of spirits revealed Himself to His newborn offspring. We are neither warranted nor forbidden by any express statement to assume any visible manifestation of Divine glory to our first parents. They "heard the voice of the Lord

The accordance of the account in Genesis with human experience.

Thought
and speech.

The
acquisition
of language.

God." They were sensible of an awful, commanding but loving and protecting Presence. They conversed with their Maker. Thought and speech are represented as already called into exercise, in the naming of the lower creatures, before man found "a help meet for him,"—a companion spirit akin to himself. It is reasonable to think that the current of intellectual, moral, and spiritual life, as well as physical, flowed strong, so near to the fountain head. The task of acquiring language, which toilsomely occupies two or three years or more of infancy, may have been condensed into a few weeks, days, or hours. Our parents could already understand the language of command, promise, and warning, when they were placed under law, and their welfare made dependent on their obedience.

The Bible
account
of man.

Compared with recent hypotheses of the slow and painful ascent of man from irrational, speechless, lawless, godless apehood, the Bible account has at all events the advantage of dignity, beauty, intelligibleness, and analogy with the known facts of human experience.

The two tremendous miracles of destruction which are repeatedly referred to in the New Testament as typical examples of Divine judgment on sin—the Deluge, and the overthrow of the Cities of the Plain—stand out in awful and vivid contrast with the general tenour of the narrative

in Genesis. These excepted, the miracles of the Deliverance from Egypt, and of the Wilderness, are as unprecedented in their colossal greatness as they are unique in character. Modern criticism finds in these miracles unquestionable proof of what it terms the "unhistorical" character of the narrative. Repugnance to miracles is a marked feature of our age, though by no means peculiar to it. The so-called scientific argument against miracles is in substance that invented by David Hume in the last century.¹ Stripped of ingenious rhetoric it amounts to this: Miracles are incredible because they are impossible; they are impossible because they have never been known to happen; and the proof that they have never been known to happen is, that they are incredible and impossible. Any experience, therefore, which affirms that they have actually been witnessed must be false. Thus barely stated, this celebrated argument makes but a poor show of either science or logic.

The miracles of the Exodus and the Wilderness.

The scientific argument against miracles in substance identical with Hume's.

¹ Professor Huxley has clearly and candidly pointed out the error of Hume's argument ("*Hume*," p. 133). But he misses the mark altogether when he tries to illustrate the incredibility of miracles from the supposed alleged occurrence of some isolated incredible phenomenon, such as the apparition of a live centaur. The miracles of Scripture are not isolated occurrences. Their evidence consists in their *setting*, their vital place in the history, and the impossibility of really explaining the history without them. If a race of centaurs had left their bones in the rocks, we should be compelled to believe in their existence; and the miracles of the Pentateuch and of the Gospels have left stronger witnesses than fossil bones—living results.

Huxley on Hume.

The
necessity
of scepticism
to deny
the Mosaic
authorship
of the
Pentateuch.

Hence the sceptic is forced to maintain that the Pentateuch was not written by Moses. Because, setting aside not only inspiration but even honesty, if the great Lawgiver simply possessed ordinary common-sense, it is incredible that he should have based his whole legislation on imaginary prodigies, and appealed to the whole nation to testify to the truth of accounts which every man, woman, and child knew to be fables. If then Moses really wrote the Pentateuch, the miracles recorded in Exodus and Deuteronomy must really have taken place. They are facts of which science is as much bound to take account, as of any other facts in human experience.

The effect
of intense
culture of
science.

That the intense culture of science begets in many minds a disposition to scepticism regarding miracles (or even scepticism of a wider range) is neither a stain upon science nor an argument for unbelief. It is simply an example of the infirmity of human intellect. Absorbing devotion to any branch of study always involves the peril of getting the intellect cramped in one attitude, the mental vision stunted to one focus. Pre-occupied with the grand ideas of immutable law, and of the unchanging order of nature, the student of science is apt to forget that in every experiment by which he interrogates nature, every word he utters, every movement of his limbs and fingers, he is a living example of the power of personal will to control

nature without interrupting the uniformity of law. A miracle is simply an exercise of the Divine will to produce a special result. It is absurd to suppose the Creator devoid of that power which is put forth by every child who flings a stone into the air, hits a mark with an arrow, or in any other way subjects matter and force to his will. It is ridiculous to assert that the Almighty Maker has so tied His own hands with the laws of His own universe, that He cannot do what He sees wise and good to do.

What a
miracle is.

“Miracles,” the sceptic may rejoin, “are not abstractly impossible, but it is incredible that the Creator would ever derange the grand and solid order of His universe for the purpose of astonishing or converting a few thousands of half-barbarous Hebrews, the rest of the world meanwhile remaining ignorant of the alleged miracles.” The argument is thus removed from scientific ground, where it has no real standing, to the moral, which is doubtless its proper field. Calmly examined in this light, the objection against the miracles of the Pentateuch is transformed into a powerful argument in their favour. For supposing that the special exercise of Divine power which we term miracle is credible, provided the end to be answered is of adequate importance, let the reader consider whether any end could be more worthy than to impress the mind of a whole nation

Sceptical
rejoinder.

Really an
argument in
favour of
miracles.

The
lessons
designed
to be
taught by
miracles.

with an indelible force which no lapse of time could weaken, the lesson of the omnipotence, wisdom, goodness, and power of the Creator, and the vanity of whatever else is called God; to inspire their faith, attract their love, awe them into implicit obedience, and prepare their minds to receive the Divine law as the basis of personal, social, and national life? Especially if this nation traced back its origin to ancestors to whom special Divine manifestations had been made, and promises given regarding their remote posterity; and was designed in fulfilment of those promises to keep alive the light of sacred tradition, and to furnish in the fulness of time the teachers of the whole Human Race.

In no other
way could
the Hebrews
have
learned
them.

In what other way is it conceivable that these lessons could have been effectually taught to the Hebrews? True, the immense majority of mankind were ignorant, and even down to the present day, are ignorant both of the miracles and of the lessons. But this is but one example of a law which governs all human progress. Truth, like light, radiates from fixed centres. Great discoveries destined in the long run to revolutionize human life and history, are at first the possession of a few, or of a single mind. As matter of historic fact, an unbroken living chain of religious faith, teaching, sympathy, prayer, and practice, connects the tent of Abraham and the legislation of Sinai, through

the life and teaching of JESUS, with the religious life of modern Christendom, and with the moral power (the only one yet discovered) which has shown itself capable in the Sandwich Islands, in Polynesia, in New Guinea, in Madagascar, in South and Central Africa, of lifting half-barbarous or wholly savage and brutal tribes into civilization, morality, and liberty.

2. The second strong contrast between the religious teaching of Genesis and those of the later books of Moses, is presented by the ELABORATE RELIGIOUS CEREMONIAL ordained by the Mosaic law. The leading elements of this system were three: a sanctuary or consecrated centre of worship; sacrifices, most accurately discriminated and classified, and an hereditary priesthood.

The Mosaic ceremonial.

The Tabernacle, or "Tent of the Testimony," which accompanied the march of Israel, taken down when the host moved, and set up where they halted, taught the great principle (a lesson likewise taught at the Burning Bush, and at Sinai) that sanctity is not inherent in any consecrated spot, but depends on the Divine Presence, to be expected and bestowed wherever the people of God are assembled. What the Tabernacle was to the Camp, the Temple afterwards was to the Land and to the Holy City.

The Tabernacle.

The principal idea symbolised in the Tabernacle was evidently that of DIVINE PRESENCE—Jehovah

Its significance.

Worship and
sacrifice
secondary
to the idea
of the
Divine
Presence.

dwelling in the midst of Israel. The ideas of worship and sacrifice were secondary, dependent on this. The pillar of cloud and of fire was the visible miraculous witness that this Divine Presence was a reality. The people were to consider themselves a nation of priests. Sanitary regulations, military order in camp or on march, political assemblies, personal behaviour, as well as religious worship, all were to be ruled by this sublime idea—the presence of the Divine King with His chosen people.¹

An hereditary
Priesthood.

An hereditary priesthood was familiar to the Israelites as an Egyptian institution. But whereas the priests of Egypt were a territorial caste, over whose lands the State had no control (Gen. xlvii. 22, 26), the law of Moses enacted that the tribe of Levi should not share in the division of the land of Canaan, excepting a number of allotted

¹ *E.g.*, Ex. xxv. 8; xxix. 42-46; xxxiii. 15, 16; Lev. xxvi. 12; Deut. xxiii. 14. Our English translators have not been careful to preserve the distinction between the two Hebrew words applied to the tabernacle; *mishkan*, habitation, and *ohel*, tent. The term *Shekinah*, used in later Hebrew for the manifestation of the Divine glory, is connected with the first word (cf. John i. 14). The two are distinguished in Ex. xl. 18, 19. The habitation or tabernacle proper was the structure of gilded boards, with its hangings of woven work. The tent of goat's hair (Ex. xxvi. 7) was spread over this inner structure. The covering (*mikseh*) of leather and sealskin (see *Speaker's Comm.* on Ex. xxv. 5, for this rendering) seems to have been a light strong waterproof over-roof, to throw off rain and snow. The same word is used of the deck or roof of Noah's ark, Gen. viii. 13.

cities, each with a narrow strip of land surrounding it. Consecrated to the service of Jehovah, they were to be sustained by the freewill offerings of the nation.

Animal sacrifices, unlike the tabernacle and the tribal priesthood, were no novelty. From the beginning they had been recognised as the appointed mode of Divine worship. The Book of Genesis contains no record of their institution; but the statement (Gen. iii. 21) that after the transgression of our first parents the Lord God clothed them with skins, has been reasonably interpreted to imply that they were commanded to sacrifice the beasts whose skins they were then instructed to prepare and wear, as symbols of the *covering* or pardon of sin through atonement.

Animal
sacrifices.

What appears to have been novel in the sacrificial ritual established by Moses, was the elaborate distinction and classification of animal sacrifices under the three principal kinds of burnt-offering, sin-offering, and peace-offering or thank-offering. The name for the first literally means "that which goeth up," namely, in fire and smoke to heaven. The second (the name for which properly means "sin"), includes the "trespass-offering." Authorities are divided as to the meaning of the name of the third class—"peace-offering," or "thank-offering"; but the general idea is the same. Ewald asserts that previous to the legislation of Sinai "the

The
classification
of animal
sacrifices.

Ewald's
assertion.

Destitute of
adequate
proof.

Ideas
symbolised
in sacrifice.

The
sacredness
of blood.

most varied forms of sacrifice had been long in operation, each with its special drift and corresponding belief.¹ But he can furnish no proof of this assertion beyond the casual intimations in Ex. x. 25 ; xviii. 12 (possibly Gen. xxxi. 54), that *some* distinctions were recognised. The sacrifices of Noah and of Job are expressly called "burnt-offerings"; and from Genesis xxii. 2 we gather that those of Abraham were of the same character. It is generally acknowledged that the most prominent idea symbolised in this kind of sacrifice is that of complete consecration to God. But the idea of atonement for sin is very plainly recognised in Job i. 5 ; xlii. 8. In like manner, the idea of atonement must not be excluded from the peace-offering, as is plain from Lev. iii. 1, 2 ; xvii. 1-14. During the sojourn in the wilderness, when the main sustenance of the Israelites was the daily manna, no beast was to be slaughtered for food without being treated as a peace-offering.²

The sacredness of blood, as representing the soul or life, was indicated in the law given to Noah (Gen. ix. 4). But the atoning value of blood is first distinctly set forth in the case of the Passover Lamb (Exodus xii.), which may be considered the prototype of the peace-offerings. Ewald truly

¹ *Antiquities of Israel*, p. 25, Solly's translation.

² Compare Deut. xii. 15, 16, for the modification of this law after they entered the Promised Land.

says: "No heathen nation had such ideas about human sin and Divine grace as had the people of Israel . . . so that it was only in this nation that the blood assumed this unique and exalted significance, and only there that it became the centre of the whole sacrificial procedure."

Among heathen nations, as in the poems of Homer, we find the custom of offering to the gods a portion of the flesh and a libation of the wine at banquets. At first sight this seems closely to resemble the thank-offering or peace-offering of Hebrew worship. But on reflection we discover a wide and important difference between sacrificing a part of the feast and feasting on a sacrifice. In the one case, the gods were invoked as guests at the banquet; in the other, God Himself is regarded as bidding His children to His table. Thus, of the seventy chiefs who with Moses, Aaron, and two of Aaron's sons, were admitted to the feast of the peace-offerings in Sinai, on the ratification of the covenant, and to a vision of the Divine glory, we read, "They saw God, and did eat and drink." (Exodus xxiv. 5-11.)

Heathen custom.

Resemblance to the thank-offering of Hebrew worship.

Difference.

The connection between Religion and History, noticed above as the first great distinctive character of the religion of the Old Testament Scriptures, is strongly marked with regard to these three essential elements of the system set up by Moses: the Tabernacle the Priesthood, the Sacrificial Ritual.

The connection between Religion and History strongly marked with regard to the Tabernacle, Priesthood, and Sacrificial Ritual of Moses.

The religion and history apart from each other inexplicable.

All three, in the records which have come down to us, are inseparably interwoven with the main facts of Hebrew story,—the deliverance from Egypt, the encampment at Sinai, the covenant between Jehovah and His people, the giving of the Law, the stubborn rebelliousness of Israel, and the consequent delay of their entrance into Canaan until the death of Moses in the fortieth year from the Exodus. You cannot explain the religion apart from the history, nor the history apart from the religion. Criticism may, in the judgment of the critics, pull the whole fabric to pieces; but it is powerless to supply anything even reasonably probable in its place.

The single sanctuary enjoined, and the many altars actually set up.

A great deal has been made (in the interest of this destructive criticism) of the alleged inconsistency between the provision in Deuteronomy (chap. xii.) for a single sanctuary in the land of Canaan, and the record in the subsequent history of altars set up and sacrifices offered at various centres of worship: as by the people at Bochim; by Gideon at Ophrah; by Manoah at Zorah; by Samuel at Ramah, Gilgal, Bethlehem; by David on Moriah; by Elijah on Carmel.¹

The discrepancy, if there be one, belongs to Deuteronomy itself, which commands the offering of burnt-offerings and peace-offerings on an altar

¹ Judg. ii. 5; vi. 24; xiii. 16; 1 Sam. vii. 17; x. 8; xvi. 2; 2 Sam. xxiv. 25; 1 Kings xviii. 30.

of stone on Mount Ebal. It is true that when this command was carried out by Joshua, the tabernacle was probably set up at Shechem (Josh. viii. 30-35); but the sacrifices were offered, not on the brazen altar, but on the separate altar on Mount Ebal. The fact is, that all these cases are covered by the promise connected with the original law regarding altars (Ex. xx. 24-26): "In all places where I record My name, I will come to thee, and I will bless thee." Sacred associations naturally gathered round any spot where the tabernacle stood for a considerable space of time. Unity of national worship was not endangered by the building of an altar on any special occasion by a recognised representative of Divine authority, like Samuel or Elijah. What would endanger it was the practice of private unauthorised sacrifices, such as those condemned in 1 Kings iii. 2; xxii. 43; 2 Kings xii. 3.¹

The original law regarding altars covers all the cases.

The real danger to unity of national worship.

As the recorded history of ancient Israel furnishes the only key to the religion of the Old Testament, otherwise inexplicable, so the religion

The history the only key to the religion.

¹ When Solomon sacrificed at Gibeon, the Tabernacle was still there, though the Ark had been brought to Jerusalem (1 Chron. iv. ; xvi. 37-40; 2 Chron. i. 3-6). It is doubtful whether the Tabernacle was for a time set up at Bethel; see Judg. xx. After its removal from Shiloh, we find it at Nob and Mizpeh; but these are probably the same; and Gibeon was so near, that possibly only one sacred place is referred to under all three names. See *Tent Work*, ii. 105, 116-120. Conder's *Handbook to Bible*, pp. 275-277.

The testimony of the religion to the history.

Any other date for the Mosaic legislation than the origin of the nation inconceivable.

The demands of scepticism on our faith greater than the miracles of the Bible.

bears witness to the history. Solomon's Temple pre-supposes the Tabernacle. It actually contained the Ark. But the Ark and the Tabernacle pre-suppose the wandering in the Wilderness; which in its turn pre-supposes Sinai and the Deliverance. The whole history from the birth of Samuel attests the importance of both the Ark and the Tabernacle. David's institutions, which survived the Captivity and lasted into the Christian era, attest the national importance and numerical strength of the tribe of Levi; their sacred character; and the hereditary priesthood of the descendants of Aaron. How can these (joined with the fact that Levi was a landless tribe) be explained apart from a legislation coeval with the existence of the nation? In a word, is it rationally conceivable that a nation so numerous, compact, tenacious of tradition, yet sturdily independent, prone to strife, and obstinately addicted to forbidden rites, should have been persuaded (before, during, or after the reigns of David and Solomon) to receive a body of new institutions, forged laws, and fictitious public annals, and that this astonishing fabrication, unparalleled in all literature, should have gained that prodigious hold on national belief and reverence which the writings ascribed to Moses undeniably possessed after the return from Babylon?

The demands made on our faith by modern sceptical criticism far exceed in fact those made

by all the miracles of the Bible. Because in the latter case, apparent physical impossibilities find an adequate explanation,—to wit, in the exercise of Divine power for worthy ends; whereas, in the former case, moral impossibilities are presented for our belief with no explanation at all.

There is an adequate explanation of the miracles.

II.

THE intimate blending of history and religion, which we have noted as the first great characteristic of the Hebrew Scriptures, is the condition of the two other characteristics also indicated: **UNITY** and **DEVELOPMENT**. These may be best considered not separately but together. For development implies unity. And the unity discoverable in the Bible is a unity of growth; not formal and mechanical, but vital, internal, spiritual.

Unity and development.

The nature of the unity.

Clearly, if the books of the Old Testament possess any real unity, it must be of this nature. For they do not compose *a Book* in any ordinary sense of the word. They are a library, a literature. They range over a thousand years. Their writers differ widely in character, genius, education, position. They reflect the most opposite phases of national life. Diversity of contents and variety of form could scarcely be more strongly exemplified than in this collection of annals, laws, biography, poems, aphorisms, prophetic oracles. If the unity

The unity
must have
an adequate
cause.

of these sacred writings were merely artificial and conventional, conferred by authority and custom, it would dissolve at the touch of serious examination. If, on the contrary, deep below this diversified and broken surface we find a unity of thought, an unbroken vein of religious teaching, growing richer from age to age, then this unity is a fact more important than the diversity. It must have an adequate cause. It demands an intelligent explanation. If natural causes cannot explain it, we must infer supernatural. If human authors could not (or manifestly did not) combine to produce it, the only possible explanation is Divine Authorship.¹

The being
and
character
of God
according
to the
opening of
the Book
of Genesis.

Does such unity, progressively unfolding itself, actually characterise the Hebrew sacred writings? To answer this question, let us take first the fundamental idea of all religion,—the BEING AND CHARACTER OF GOD. The Book of Genesis opens with affirming the deepest relation we and all other beings sustain to God as our Creator. Metaphysical questions as to self-existence, eternity, infinity, space, and time, the nature of matter and of mind, are never raised. Yet in fact they all lie wrapt up in the plain historical statement that “in the beginning, God created the heaven and the

¹ For a powerful exhibition of some aspects of this great subject, see Henry Rogers' *Lectures on the Superhuman Origin of the Bible*, pp. 152-181.

earth." Creation appears in the record as an orderly process, crowned with the birth of man. Its successive stages—the hidden stirring of life under the dark waters, the dawn of light, the formation of an atmosphere, the upheaval of islands and continents, the growth of plant life, the appearance in the clear sky of sun, moon, and stars, the appearance on the stage of life of fishes and other marine animals, reptiles, birds, mammals, last of all man—display a wonderful agreement with the latest discoveries of human science. But a height is reached of which science knows nothing, in the account of the Creator's beneficent delight in His work (Gen. i. 31); and in the assertion of a Divine type and purpose in man, the lord of creation (v. 26–28).

Creation a process crowned with the birth of man.

Man is represented as from the first placed in direct moral relations with his Maker. A specially prepared home, work, the Sabbath, marriage, and a positive command, the test of obedience, bless and fence his life. Disobedience is represented as putting him (as it needs must) in a sadly altered relation to God. He is called to account, found guilty, sentenced to the loss of Eden, made subject to death. No explanation is given of that awful word. If bodily dissolution, simple *animal death* be meant, then it is evident that execution of the penalty—"in the day that thou eatest thereof, dying thou shalt die"—was deferred. If the history

Man placed in direct moral relations with his Maker.

means us to understand that it was rigorously carried out, then evidently something else is meant than animal death, howsoever closely connected with it. Nevertheless, man retains his highest privilege,—direct converse with his Maker. Not to repeat here what has already been said concerning sacrifice, we see God reasoning with Cain, when his mind is dull with discontent and murderous jealousy, seeking to win him to repentance, and cheering him, as Adam and Eve were cheered after their transgression, with words of grace and promise (Gen. iv. 6, 7).

These representations of God and man unparalleled in Pagan literature.

Parallels in the Hebrew Scriptures.

We shall search in vain the sacred books and the entire literature of Pagan nations, for any adequate parallel to these representations of the absolute authority and just severity of the Creator, united with fatherly tenderness towards the sinner, and effort to win him to repentance, or hold him back from sin. But parallels abound throughout the Hebrew Scriptures. As examples, we may refer to the startling description of Divine sorrow over man's sin, and the hundred and twenty years' respite granted in Noah's time to the doomed world;¹ the place assigned to intercession, as of Abraham for Sodom, of Moses for Israel, of Job for his friends;² the pathetic warnings of Moses

¹ Gen. vi. 3, 5-7.

² Gen. xviii. 23-33; Ex. xxxii. 30, ff.; xxxiii. 6, 7; Job i. 5; xlii. 8.

to Israel;¹ the echo of those warnings by his successor, Joshua;² Samuel's faithful and solemn rebuke to the National Assembly, joined with the assurance that the Lord would "not forsake His people, for His great name's sake;"³ Isaiah's call to come and reason together with God, joined with a gracious promise of pardon to the penitent;⁴ Jeremiah's thunderbolts of terror, flashing and pealing through a tempest of tears;⁵ Ezekiel's trumpet blast of warning;⁶ the homely remonstrance and final warning of the latest of the prophets.⁷ The list might be indefinitely extended. The preaching of John the Baptist, the last prophet of the Old Testament, sounded afresh the key note which thus rings through the Hebrew Bible. Its full-toned harmony is heard in the preaching of Jesus: in His invitation to the "labouring and heavy-laden;" His picture of the prodigal returning to his father; His lament over impenitent Jerusalem.

From these specimens it is clear that a consistent strain of teaching, in the form not of dogma but of historic narrative and practical appeal, pervades the books of the Old Testament. Human life is everywhere regarded in direct moral relation to Divine law, authority, and mercy. The appeal is

A consistent strain of teaching pervades the Old Testament.

¹ *E.g.* Deut. viii. 30.

² Josh. xxiv. 14-25.

³ 1 Sam. xii. 7-25.

⁴ Isa. i. 18

⁵ Jer. ii. 2-13; iv. 1-9; v. 9-31; ix. 1-24.

⁶ Ezek. xxxiii. 7-20.

⁷ Mal. i. 6-11; iv. 1.

sometimes chiefly to the nation, sometimes to individuals. But in both cases one fact is to be noted, unaccountable (I think) on the supposition that we have here no Divine message, but simply men seeking to instruct their fellows. The aim throughout is not to inform and convince the intellect, but to affect and control the affections, conscience, and conduct.

Two words
describing
the Divine
character.

The portraiture of the Divine character thus progressively set forth, must be further studied (if we desire any clear view of it) in two words of very frequent recurrence and high significance,—‘righteous’ (or ‘just’) and ‘holy.’ The words intimately connected with these must of course be included. The intuitive belief in the justice of God as “Judge of all the earth” is the foundation of Abraham’s plea for Sodom. A sense of justice and a keen hot resentment against injustice spring up so soon in the breasts of children, that we are sure human language very early contained words to denote these feelings. As soon as men formed any notion of moral goodness, human or divine, the attribute of righteousness must inevitably have entered into it.

Righteous-
ness.

Holiness.

‘Holiness’ is a more difficult, more advanced idea. It does not naturally spring up in a child’s mind. The words expressing it do not occur in Genesis, excepting in the statement that God blessed and sanctified—hallowed or made holy—the

seventh day. This excepted, the notion of holiness meets us first in the command to Moses to strip off his sandals, because he was standing on "holy ground" (Ex. iii. 5). The spot was consecrated by the Divine Presence. The original meaning of this group of words seems to have been *separation*, *q.d.*, to God's service: consecration. A difficulty obviously arises, in the transference of such words to God Himself. What is really meant by the command "Be ye holy, for I AM HOLY?" The reply must be sought not in logic but in feeling. Moral ideas enter the intellect through the emotions. Reverence, awe, rigorously pure worship, imply corresponding qualities in Him to whom they are due. The stronger the emotions, the more vivid the idea. The faultless purity, rigid separation, absolute surrender, mysterious reverence, with which the Mosaic law invested every thing or person consecrated to God, trained the worshipper's feelings regarding God; and these feelings gave birth to ideas in their own likeness. God's own innate holiness came to be recognized as the fountain, from which the holiness belonging to things, persons, actions, times, places, streamed forth. Hence the central idea of holiness in the Old Testament is essentially moral or spiritual. To suppose it ceremonial because largely taught by ceremonies, is a shallow but fatal error. The smallest amount of intelligent reflection must have

Their original meaning.

The real meaning must be sought in the feelings.

The central idea of holiness in the Old Testament essentially moral or spiritual.

Ceremonial,
ritual
holiness
could not
belong to
God.

taught the Hebrew worshipper that ceremonial, ritual holiness could not belong to God. God's holiness could mean nothing less than that nature and character which make Him supremely worthy of worship and love; what in modern phrase we express by 'supreme moral excellence,' or 'spiritual perfection.'

The
importance
of the fact
in relation
to the
origin of
the Hebrew
religion.

The importance of this fact in regard to our inquiry into the origin of the Hebrew religion cannot be exaggerated. It lies at the very heart of that religion. No explanation is worth looking at which does not account for it. The evidence of its reality must be sought in careful study, not only of the books of Moses, but of the commentary supplied by later writings—especially the Psalms, Proverbs, and prophetic books—on the view of Divine holiness actually held and taught by the religious authorities of the nation. It pertains, however, to the very outset of such study to bear in mind that the Ten Commandments—the starting point of the whole law—are not ritual, but moral. The tenth refers purely to inward desire and will.¹ The law of the Sabbath is no exception, for abstinence from labour is not a ceremony, but as practical a thing as abstinence from theft or perjury; and the moral results of the religious observance of the Sabbath are as real and wide-reaching as those of obedience to any other commandment.

The Ten
Command-
ments not
ritual, but
moral.

¹ Comp. Rom. vii. 7.

Many readers will be aware that a completely different view is maintained by critics and divines of undoubted ability and scholarship, who claim to stand in the front rank as leaders of Biblical science and of theological thought. In the movement long and strenuously carried on for the disintegration of the Bible, an important place is filled by the view that the Levitical or legal teaching and the prophetic teaching of Old Testament Scripture are independent, inconsistent, and contradictory. If David—to whom the organization of the priests and Levites, the regulations of the Temple ritual, and the very building of the Temple were owing—says that “the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul,” and prays to be kept from “secret faults,” and to have “a clean heart and a right spirit”; if Solomon declares “the fear of the Lord” to consist in departing from evil, and “the knowledge of God” to be inseparable from “righteousness and judgment and equity, yea every good path”; if Isaiah and Amos speak with scorn of sacrifices and prayers offered by those “whose hands are full of blood”; if Micah asks “What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” it is maintained that the strong, clear, deep stream of teaching of which these are samples must flow from another fountain than that which teaches that “the blood of bulls and of goats,

This view
disputed by
scholars of
eminence.

The inward,
moral, and
spiritual
views of
David and
others
assigned to
another
source than
the ritual
teaching.

and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh.”¹

The Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy, denied by this school.

Of course, this school of critics denies that Moses was the author of Deuteronomy; otherwise, their view would be at once convicted of error, since none of the prophets can go beyond the simple comprehensive statements of Deuteronomy, which describe religion as essentially consisting in love, faith, and obedience.² Perhaps a sufficient refutation of the view in question is supplied by the hundred and nineteenth Psalm. This perfectly unique composition gives us the views and feelings of a pious Israelite (of what tribe, rank, or calling we have no means of guessing) concerning the Divine Law. The written Word of God, under a great variety of names (the Rabbins reckon *ten*), is here described as an ideally perfect standard of character and conduct, “righteous and very faithful,” “very pure,” and “exceeding broad”; by giving heed to which the young man may “cleanse his way,” the afflicted servant of God be quickened and comforted, the entrance of which “giveth light, it giveth understanding to the simple.” “Thy righteousness,” exclaims the Psalmist, “is an everlasting righteousness, and Thy law is the truth.” It seems impossible to rise to a higher conception

The 119th Psalm, a refutation of this criticism.

¹ Heb. ix. 8-14.

² *E.g.* Deut. vi. 4, 5; viii. 1-3 x. 12-21; xiii. 4; xv. 7-10; xxx. 1-6, 11-15, 20.

of Divine truth, or a loftier level of spiritual temper and thought than this remarkable psalm exhibits. Is it critical acumen, or is it mere blindness, which can discern in that LAW in which the Psalmist beheld such Divine wonders, nothing but the work of priests and forgers; a melange of superstitious inventions, heathen traditions, fictitious histories, and pious frauds?¹

One other point, the importance of which cannot be over-estimated, demands careful consideration. Over against the conceptions of Divine righteousness, holiness, and purity, the Hebrew Scriptures set that of their dark opposite—human SIN. The one cannot be understood apart from the other. No theory of the origin of the Hebrew religion merits serious attention which cannot give an honest and satisfactory reply to the question, *Whence was the idea of sin which pervades the Old Testament Scriptures derived?*

The
Scripture
view of sin.

Whence
was it
derived?

Not even the poetic and historic literature, far less the sacred books, of all other ancient nations, can stand comparison with the Hebrew Scriptures in human interest. No phase of human life is unreflected in that wondrous mirror; no note is left untouched throughout the diapason of human emotion. Every vicissitude of human fortune finds

The varied
and un-
rivalled
human
interest of
the Hebrew
Scriptures.

¹ These are not random words, but a guarded and a moderate statement of what is implied necessarily in the theory that the laws of Moses were not given by God, and that the so-called books of Moses were forgeries of later ages.

a place in these pages, from the throne to the dungeon, from the cradle to the grave. Every type of human character is represented, from the most heroic greatness or saintliest purity to the most unbridled and revolting wickedness. A procession of empires passes across that narrow stage. We hear the jubilant songs of harvest and vintage, the music of feasts, the stern hymn of warriors, the paeon of victory, the choral chant of temple worship, the wail of the dirge. Yet with this unrivalled fulness and all but endless variety of human interest, national tradition, and individual portraiture, it is no exaggeration to say that one dominant character pervades the whole delineation; one thought underlies the whole, even where it does not appear on the surface; one deep sorrowful note rings like a knell through all the music. It is that which St. Paul utters when, quoting from the Old Testament, he says that "ALL HAVE SINNED, and come short of the glory of God."¹

The underlying-
thought of
the whole.

The proof
to be dis-
covered by
attentive
study of
the Old
Testament.

For the proof that this is so, the reader must be referred to the entire body of Hebrew Scripture. He must not merely scan its letter, but labour to gauge its drift and fathom its spirit. In this attempt it is indispensable that attention be given to the terms under which this conception of sin is presented. The Hebrew language is rich in moral synonyms. Nine principal words may be noted,

¹ Rom. iii. 23.

without separately noticing the various forms in which some of them appear. Our translators have observed no certain rule in rendering them.

1. *Chattath* (*chattaah, chet*); Sin; perhaps originally 'error,' 'missing the mark.'
2. *Pesha'*: Transgression; perhaps 'breach.'
3. *Resha'*: Unrighteousness; wickedness.
4. *Asham*: Guilt; perhaps originally 'default,' the word is rendered 'trespass' in the law concerning 'trespass-offerings.'
5. *Avōn*: Perversity; crime.
6. *Aven*: Vanity; iniquity.
7. '*Evel* (*'avlah*): Wickedness; depravity; properly 'twisting aside.'
8. *Ma'al*: Trespass.
9. *Ra'* (*ra'ah*): Ill; evil.¹

Terms used for presenting the conception of sin.

One fact of immense interest comes out from this list of words; namely, that the Hebrew conception of sin was moral, not ceremonial. This is as true of the Law as of the historical and prophetic writings. The reverse might have been looked for. Considering the prominence given in the ceremonial law to ideas of defilement and purification, we

The Hebrew conception of sin moral, not ceremonial.

¹ The English reader may find the occurrence of each Hebrew word in Dr. Young's *Concordance*, by looking under all the English words, "sin," "iniquity," etc.

Words for
moral
attributes
originally
metaphors.

The
metaphoric
sense had
died out of
the Hebrew
words before
the language
took the
earliest
form in
which we
find it.

might have expected these symbolic notions to be reflected in the terms employed to express sin. Not one of these terms has any such meaning. Not only so. Although it is certain that in Hebrew as in other languages the words used for moral attributes and sentiments must have been originally metaphors taken from objects of sense, yet in none of these Hebrew words is the metaphor obvious.¹ Their etymology is rather matter of learned conjectures than of certainty. The inference is plain. These words were so anciently and so constantly used in a moral sense, that the metaphoric meaning had died out of them before the Hebrew language took the earliest form in which we find it. They had come to stand for the purely moral ideas of disobedience to law, infraction of right, and desert of blame and penalty.

The reader can therefore easily estimate the value of the assertion sometimes made as confidently as if it were a scientific discovery, that the idea of sin entertained by the ancient Hebrews was that of ceremonial defilement, to be got rid of by ceremonial purification, or of definite outward acts, to be balanced by other definite acts of atonement

¹ They contrast curiously, therefore, with a great number of English words, in some of which the metaphor lies on the surface (as *upright*, *base*, *heartless*, *close-fisted*) ; while in others (as *right*, *wrong*, *perverse*, *transgression*), it is transparent to any one who has a moderate knowledge of etymology. Our word '*sin*,' on the other hand, is a very ancient word, and seems to have had a moral meaning from the first.

or penalty. The Hebrew language itself bears irrefragable witness that the pollutions and purifications ordained by the ceremonial law were but symbols of a stain they could not reach and a purity they could not bestow; the pollution of the heart and conscience by inward sin, and the purification of Divine forgiveness and restoration to God's image. If the penitent exclaimed, "*Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it,*" he spoke in perfect accord with the law, which ordained for such crimes as murder and adultery, not sacrifice, but "death without mercy." And if he prayed, "*Hide Thy face from my sins; and blot out all mine iniquities; create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me;*" he but interpreted the deepest lessons of the law, which shone through its ritual as through a transparent veil: lessons which the great Law-giver himself declared that God's own voice had proclaimed in his ears. (Ex. xxxiii. 19; xxxiv. 6.)

The symbolical sense of ceremonial purifications.

We are thus brought back to the central conception which gives unity to the religious teaching of the whole body of the Hebrew Scriptures,—the MORAL CHARACTER OF GOD, IN PERSONAL RELATION WITH MANKIND AND WITH EACH HUMAN BEING. This great central doctrine (which includes the truths of man's personality, moral character, and accountableness) is developed by means of human history and experience,—especially the experience

The central conception of the religious teaching of the Old Testament.

Four lines
of illus-
tration.

Public
history.

Symbolism
and media-
tion.

Prophecy.

Personal
experience.

of sin. Four main lines of illustration combine to unfold this greatest of lessons. (1) Public history, especially as concerned with those calamities which the Scriptures represent as Divine judgments on sin: as the Deluge, the destruction of Sodom, the overthrow of Pharaoh, the punishment of the rebellious Israelites, the extermination of the depraved idolaters of Canaan, the Babylonish captivity, the overthrow of Babylon. (2) Symbolic worship and priestly mediation. (3) Prophetic ministry, interpreting God's law, will, truth, and promises. (4) Personal experience; vividly illustrating, on the one hand, the care and guidance of God's providence, and leading and teaching of His Spirit, bestowed on those who fear Him; on the other hand, the life of faith, penitence, prayer, and loving obedience to God. In this last method the teaching of the three other methods is brought to a practical focus. It may be summed up in the words in which the most sorrowful of the prophets, in the most mournful book of Scripture, utters his peaceful faith: "The LORD is good unto them that wait for Him, to the soul that seeketh Him." (Lam. iii. 25.)

Purity of
Old Testa-
ment moral
sentiment.

One of the strongest points of contrast between the religion of the Old Testament Scriptures and heathen religions is its *purity of moral sentiment*. Paganism deifies lust. The orgies of the wine-god in Greece, the abominations of which it is a shame

even to speak practised in the temples of Babylon and Phœnicia, the priestly frauds which made it hard for Roman augurs to keep their countenance in one another's company, find no counterpart—nothing but stern condemnation—in the religion of Jehovah. Vices shamelessly practised among the cultured Greeks, and sung about by the most elegant Roman poets, were branded with infamy among the Hebrews. When these plague-spots infected Israel (as they often did) it was always in connection with idolatry; and they were denounced by the prophets as the sure precursors of national ruin. Vice and crime are no doubt described, when the purpose of the Scripture narrative requires, with antique plainness of speech shocking to our modern taste. The failings and sins of pious men are recorded with merciless candour. But never can one detect a trace of sympathy with vileness, cruelty, intemperance, or falsehood. Even those terrible denunciations of transgressors which modern readers are often at a loss to reconcile with the spirit of the Gospel, draw their severity from that intense moral indignation against wrong, in which modern sentiment is defective; and which in those rough times was a needful safeguard of moral purity.

Contrast
with other
religions.

Historic
fidelity of
the Old
Testament
without
trace of
sympathy
with moral
evil.

Yet the religion of the Bible is no less remarkable for its tenderness than for its severe purity. Once in five hundred or a thousand years, when morality

Tenderness
of the Bible.

Comfort of
the Hebrew
Scriptures.

Divine care
for mankind
and the
lower crea-
tures.

is on the brink of perishing among men, the sword of justice smites and spares not. Hostile criticism, blind because hostile, fixes on these rare and long-deferred examples of divine severity (always prefaced by forbearance and warning), and overlooks the fact that the prevailing representation of the divine character places mercy, compassion, kindness, tenderness among its foremost attributes. Heathen poets have sounded the depths of human sorrow, passion, and pity; but nowhere in pagan literature, least of all in the religious books of heathendom, can we catch even the echo of that full-toned tenderness and gracious comfort which rings through the Hebrew Scriptures, assuring us that "the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy." Even the lower animals are represented as largely sharing divine care and compassion. It is not a little significant, that the rainbow, that smile of the tempest in which the myths of heathendom saw only a bridge for spirits to cross, is in the book of Genesis the emblem of God's remembrance of man's frailty, and faithful promise both to mankind and to the lower creatures. "His tender mercies are over all His works."

It has not seemed necessary formally to discuss the view which regards the God of the Old Testament, or of the Pentateuch, as a national Deity, and the Hebrew religion as but one among the many national religions of ancient heathendom.

If the outline here traced be just, this theory is refuted at every step, and has no standing-room. It is contradicted by the basis laid for religion in the account of Creation, in harmony with which is the constant prominence given to the claims of Jehovah as Creator of all things; by the express claim of sovereignty and ownership over all nations made in those very passages in which Israel is said to be, for certain purposes, a chosen people;¹ by the universal views of divine providence which pervade the whole history, and are grandly summed up in Psalm cvii.; and by the world-wide promises which ring like unearthly music along the course of prophecy, from the promise to Abraham, that *in him* ALL NATIONS should be blessed, to such declarations of universal divine sovereignty, and such invitations to all nations to worship Jehovah as are contained in the Psalms.² The intense national pride and narrowness of the Jews, especially as the time drew near for their ancestral faith to take its destined form as the universal religion, afford a moral demonstration that these anticipations in the Old Testament Scriptures of the world-wide philanthropy of the New, owe their inspiration to a higher source than Semitic religiousness or Hebrew genius.

Jehovah
the God of
the whole
earth.

The
narrowness
of the Jews,
an argument
for the
Divine
origin of
their
Scriptures.

¹ *E.g.* Gen. xv. 14, 16; Ex. ix. 29; xix. 5; Deut. vii. 6-8; viii. 19, 20.

² *E.g.* Ps. xxii. 28; xxiv. 1, 2; lxvii. 2-4; xcv. 3-6; xcvi. 10; c. 1, 2.

The
conclusion
from the
argument.

The foregoing review, necessarily brief and condensed, appears not simply to warrant but to compel the conclusion, that when the most has been made of all the parallels and resemblances which can be collected from the sacred writings of other ancient religions, the Religion of Ancient Israel, from Abraham to Malachi and John the Baptist, stands majestically and superhumanly alone.

Inadequate
explanation
refuted.

Science herself may well be interrogated at the bar of common sense, and asked to give account of phenomena covering so vast a range of human experience, and of such surpassing grandeur and unique interest. The only explanation, apart from that embodied in the Hebrew records themselves, seems to be that the little nation of Israel, inferior in all other respects to all the great nations of antiquity, possessed a unique religious genius, by the force of which they outstripped in this one field the whole human race; and finally gave birth to the universal religion of Christ. This hypothesis will not bear serious scrutiny. In the first place, it denies the facts to be explained, and substitutes romance for philosophy. For if even the main outlines of Hebrew history are to be trusted, it was not the Nation which produced the Religion, but the Religion which produced the Nation. Secondly, it contradicts all the evidence respecting the character of the Hebrew people. The stern rebuke of their great Lawgiver: "Ye have been rebel-

lions against the Lord from the day that I knew you" (Deut. ix. 24), is re-echoed by the whole series of prophets. Two of the lessons of the Decalogue the Jews indeed learned from the Babylonish captivity, and never afterwards forgot: hatred of idols, and reverence for the Sabbath. But their religious development as a nation during the following five centuries consisted not in the perfecting of Old Testament teaching, and the raising of public and private life to the level it required; but in substituting the Rabbi for the Prophet, and encasing religious life in the most elaborate crust of mechanical formulas men have ever invented or groaned under. When the crowning test was applied, by the appearance of Him to whom all the prophets bore witness, the religious leaders of the nation proved yet more blind than the multitude whom they cursed as ignorant of the law. They could see in JESUS neither "grace and truth," nor "the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father." They condemned the holiest, wisest, greatest, and best of Teachers as a blasphemous and traitor; and crucified their King. But in the hands of the Crucified One, the religion of the Hebrew Scriptures,—the religion of Abraham, Moses, David, Isaiah, John the Baptist, freed from all that was national, local, temporary, became the one possible UNIVERSAL RELIGION for mankind.

The religious development of the nation after the Babylonish captivity.

Their rejection of Christ.

What the Hebrew religion became in the hands of the Crucified.



PRESENT DAY TRACTS, No. 28.

THE PHILOSOPHY
OF
MR. HERBERT SPENCER
EXAMINED.

BY THE
REV. JAMES IVERACH, M.A.,
AUTHOR OF "IS GOD KNOWABLE?"



THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY:
PATERNOSTER ROW; 65, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD; AND
164, PICCADILLY.

Argument of the Tract.

AGNOSTICISM, a new word ; definition of its meaning. Reasons for taking Mr. Herbert Spencer as the typical Agnostic. Fundamental position of Mr. Spencer. His Agnosticism based on his doctrine of consciousness ; statement of that doctrine gathered from his works. Inadequacy of it, and the inconsistency between Mr. Spencer's analysis of consciousness, and his use of language. Consciousness cannot be resolved into states ; must belong to a personal being. We must regard consciousness as the consciousness of a being who feels, wills, thinks. Criticism of Mr. Spencer's *First Principles*. The attempt to make the ultimate generalizations of science into *a priori* intuitions of the mind is a failure, contradicted by scientific men, and by the experience of mankind. In discarding these intuitions which are universal and necessary, and in substituting in their place the ultimate generalizations of science, Mr. Spencer has been unreasonable and absurd. The Spencerian doctrine of the Unknowable founded on a misconception. The antinomies of Kant, and their solution. There are different kinds of being in the world. There are infinite being and finite being,—beings who are conscious, and beings who are unconscious ; and the antinomies cease to be contradictory when we recognise different orders of being. Conclusion that the action of our intelligence is true and trustworthy.

THE
PHILOSOPHY OF MR. HERBERT SPENCER
EXAMINED.



AGNOSTICISM is a new word, lately introduced into the English language, for the purpose of expressing a certain attitude of mind. It is doubtful whether the word is an advantage, but it has become so popular that we are constrained to use it. At first sight it appears a very innocent word. What can be more innocent or more proper than to say, "I do not know," or "I do not know completely and thoroughly." If this were all, we should certainly have no controversy with the Agnostics. But Agnosticism has now come to have a larger meaning. It has advanced beyond the affirmation that our knowledge is partial and incomplete; and it has thrown doubt on the trustworthiness of our intelligence. It dogmatically affirms that true or real knowledge is impossible to man. It tends to destroy the foundation on which belief, knowledge, and action rest.

Agosticism
a new word.

The
necessity of
using it.

The system
throws
doubt on
the trust-
worthiness
of our
intelligence.

The reality of knowledge does not involve the

The
limitations
of our
knowledge.

omniscience of the person who knows. We may have to submit to ignorance because of lack of evidence; we may also have to submit to ignorance because we are finite beings. All that we need to contend for is that within the range of our faculties, and in the normal exercise of our powers, we may attain to real knowledge. The beliefs which are necessary to us are true and trustworthy, and have a true correspondence with the reality of things. We must trust the necessary beliefs, in correspondence with which we must think. Knowledge is one; and if at any one point the action of our intelligence is untrustworthy, it can never be trusted at all; and the result is self-contradiction and universal scepticism.

The trust-
worthiness
of necessary
beliefs.

The
literature
of Agnos-
ticism.

The literature of Agnosticism has grown to a great bulk, and for the sake of clearness, we have, in any discussion of it, to make a selection. We shall do no injustice to Agnosticism in taking the writings of Mr. Herbert Spencer as the chief exposition of the Agnostic view. He is recognised on all hands, and particularly by the Agnostics themselves, as their chief apostle. From the references to him and to his writings, which abound in current literature, we gather that the best presentation of the Agnostic view is to be found in his works. According to these references, Mr. Spencer with one hand has shut the door which seemed to lead the human mind into the region of the infinite and eter-

Mr. H.
Spencer
acknow-
ledged to
be the
greatest
of the
Agnostics.

nal, and with the other hand has opened the gate which leads into the fruitful fields of positive knowledge. He is the "Modern Aristotle," who has unified our knowledge, and has accomplished for us, after the accumulated experience of two thousand years and more, what Aristotle had accomplished for the smaller world of knowledge of his time. No Agnostic, then, can complain when we take the writings of Mr. Spencer as typical of this intellectual movement. On their own showing he is the strongest, wisest of them all. They have called him "Our Philosopher." We proceed then to examine the argument for Agnosticism as set forth by Mr. Herbert Spencer.

His argument is briefly this: Emotion, volition, thought, are states of consciousness, and therefore cannot co-exist. Consciousness is formed of successive states, and to think of the Divine Being as possessing a consciousness, consisting of successive states, is to stop short with verbal propositions. We are using unreal words. It is quite true on the terms proposed by Mr. Spencer, we cannot speak of emotion, volition, thought, in relation to the Divine Being, any more than we can speak of them in relation to any being, if consciousness be only a series of states. We shall therefore discuss the subject in the following order:—

His
argument.

The order
of the dis-
cussion.

I. We shall show by reference to the works of

Mr. Spencer, that he does resolve consciousness into a series of states.

II. We shall show that he is compelled to disregard his own analysis of consciousness, and to speak of mind as a being which experiences these states.

III. We shall show that the ultimate generalizations of science which Mr. Spencer elevates into first principles, have not these qualities of universality and necessity which first principles ought to have, and that we must return to those primary beliefs which he has discarded.

IV. We shall examine the grounds on which he propounds his doctrine of the Unknowable.

I.

MR. SPENCER'S DOCTRINE OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

Mr.
Spencer's
recent
article our
starting
point.

We shall take, as the starting-point of our criticism, one of the latest utterances of Mr. Spencer, in which he has himself summarised for us the principles of his philosophy, and their bearings on religion. This summary, no doubt, presupposes a knowledge of the voluminous works of Mr. Spencer, and we shall have to refer to some of these in the course of this argument. Meanwhile

we extract from the article in question the following :—¹

“All emotions can exist only in a consciousness that is limited. Every emotion has its antecedent ideas, and antecedent ideas are habitually supposed to occur in God : he is represented as seeing and hearing this or the other, and as being emotionally affected thereby. That is to say, the conception of a divinity possessing these traits of character, necessarily continues anthropomorphic : not only in the sense that the emotions ascribed are like those of human beings, but also in the sense that they form parts of a consciousness which, like the human consciousness, is formed of successive states. And such a conception of the divine consciousness is irreconcilable both with the unchangeableness otherwise alleged, and with the omniscience otherwise alleged. For a consciousness constituted of ideas and feelings caused by objects and occurrences cannot be simultaneously occupied with all objects and all occurrences throughout the universe. To believe in a divine consciousness, men must refrain from thinking what is meant by consciousness—must stop short with verbal propositions ; and propositions which they are debarred from rendering into thought will more and more fail to satisfy them. Of course, like difficulties present themselves when the will of God is spoken of. So long as we refrain from giving a definite meaning to the word will, we may say that it is possessed by the Cause of All Things, as readily as we may say that love of approbation is possessed by a circle ; but when from the words we pass to the thoughts they stand for, we find that we can no more unite in consciousness the terms of the one proposition than we can those of the other. Whoever conceives any other will than his own must do so in terms of his own will, which is the sole will directly known to him—all other wills being only inferred. But will, as each is conscious of it, presupposes a motive—a prompting desire of some sort ; absolute indifference excludes the conception of will. Moreover will, as implying a prompting desire, connotes some end contemplated as one to be achieved, and ceases with the achievement of it ; some other will referring to some other

His statement of the case of Agnosticism.

¹ “Religion ; a Retrospect and Prospect.” By Herbert Spencer. *Nineteenth Century*, January, 1884.

end, taking its place. That is to say, will, like emotion, necessarily supposes a series of states of consciousness. The conception of a divine will, derived from that of the human will, involves, like it, localization in space and time ; the willing of each end excluding from consciousness for an interval the willing of other ends, and therefore being inconsistent with that omnipresent activity which simultaneously works out an infinity of ends. It is the same with the ascription of intelligence. Not to dwell on the seriality and limitation implied as before, we may note that intelligence as alone conceivable by us, presupposes existences independent of it and objective to it. It is carried on in terms of changes primarily wrought by alien activities,—the impressions generated by things beyond consciousness, and the ideas derived from such impressions. To speak of an intelligence which exists in the absence of all such alien activities, is to use a meaningless word. If to the corollary that the First Cause, considered as intelligent, must be continually affected by independent objective activities, it is replied that these have become such by act of creation, and were previously included in the First Cause : then the reply is that in such case the First Cause could, before this creation, have had nothing to generate in it such changes as those constituting what we call intelligence, and must therefore have been unintelligent at the time when intelligence was most called for. Hence it is clear that the intelligence ascribed answers in no respect to that which we know by the name. It is intelligence out of which all the characters constituting it have vanished."

This is perhaps the strongest statement of the case for Agnosticism which we have been able to find. It appears again and again in the works of Mr. Spencer. On it he lays great stress, and he seems to regard it as more effective, if not more decisive, than the argument derived from the nature of the Infinite, the Absolute, and the Unconditioned, which bulk so largely in the opening chapters of the *First Principles*. The strength

Stress laid
by Mr.
Spencer
on his
analysis of
conscious-
ness.

of the argument lies in the assumption that "consciousness cannot be in two states at the same time," that consciousness is formed of successive states, and is nothing but the succession of these states. It seems at first sight difficult to believe that such a position could be really held by a writer of the reputation of Mr. Spencer; all the more difficult it is when we read those parts of his voluminous works in which he does not deal directly with consciousness, but is using his consciousness as an instrument for the discovery of truth. He continually assumes that man has the power of looking before and after; that states of consciousness can be compared, classified, and arranged; and that somehow there is a principle of continuity in knowledge. We find a vivid contrast between what Mr. Spencer describes consciousness to be, and what consciousness is able to accomplish. He will not allow us to regard consciousness as anything but a series of successive states; while he continually uses language which implies a permanent self who is conscious of these states.

The strength of his argument is that consciousness cannot be in two states at the same time.

Inconsistency of his language.

The question is of such importance that we feel bound to make sure of the meaning of Mr. Spencer. It is difficult indeed to be sure, for the language he uses is by no means consistent with itself. Take the following from the *First Principles* :—

"Belief in the reality of self is, indeed, a belief which no hypothesis enables us to escape. What shall we say of these

Mr. Spencer's view that reason cannot justify the belief in the reality of the individual mind.

successive impressions and ideas which constitute consciousness? Shall we say that they are the affections of something called mind, which as being the subject of them, is the real *ego*? If we say this we manifestly imply that the *ego* is an entity."¹

We need not quote the passage at greater length. It consists in showing first that we "must admit the reality of the individual mind," and second, that this belief admits of no justification by reason, nay, that "it is a belief which reason, when pressed for a distinct answer, rejects." Mr. Spencer tells us that

"The mental state in which self is known, implies like every other mental act, a perceiving subject and a perceived object. If then the object perceived is self, what is the subject that perceives? or if it is the true self which thinks, what other self can it be that is thought of? Clearly, a true cognition of self implies a state in which the knowing and the known are one—in which subject and object are one; and this Mr. Mansel rightly holds to be the annihilation of both. So that the personality of which each is conscious, and of which the existence is to each a fact beyond all others the most certain, is yet a thing which cannot truly be known at all; the knowledge of it is forbidden by the very nature of thought."²

Illustrations of this statement.

In almost all his writings, Mr. Spencer returns to this analysis of consciousness. To quote again from the passage on the freedom of the will—

"Considered as an internal perception, the illusion consists in supposing that at each moment the *ego* is something more than the aggregate of feelings and ideas, actual and nascent, which then exists. A man who, after being subject to an impulse consisting of a group of psychical states, real and ideal, performs a certain action, usually asserts that he determined to

¹ *First Principles*, p. 64.

² *Ibid*, pp. 65, 66.

perform the action ; and by speaking of his conscious self as having done something separate from the group of psychical states constituting the impulse, is led into the error of supposing that it was not the impulse alone which determined the action. But the entire group of psychical states which constituted the antecedent of the action also constituted himself at that moment,—constituted his psychical self, that is, as distinguished from his physical self. It is alike true that he determined the action, and that the aggregate of his feelings and ideas determined it, since during its existence this aggregate constituted his then state of consciousness, that is, himself.”¹

It is necessary to give attention to this view of Mr. Spencer, for it is the main foundation of the Agnostic position. On it he bases his argument as he unfolds it in the *Nineteenth Century*. It bears all the weight of the great inference that there can be no mind equal to the creation, maintenance, and government of the universe. To illustrate this point we make one more quotation :

Mr.
Spencer's
view
the main
foundation
of the
Agnostic
argument.

“If, then, I have to conceive evolution as caused by an ‘Originating Mind,’ I must conceive this Mind as having attributes akin to those of the only mind I know, and without which I cannot conceive mind at all. I will not dwell on the many incongruities hence resulting by asking how the ‘Originating Mind’ is to be thought of as having states produced by things objective to it ; as discriminating among these states, and classing them as like and unlike, and as preferring one objective result to another. I will simply ask, What happens if we ascribe to the ‘Originating Mind’ the character absolutely essential to the conception of mind, that it consists of a series of states of consciousness ? Put a series of states of consciousness as cause, and the evolving universe as effect, and then endeavour to see the last as flowing from the first. It is possible to imagine in some dim kind of way a series of states of consciousness serving as antecedent to any one of the move-

¹ *Principles of Psychology*, Vol. I., pp. 500-501.

ments I see going on, for my own states of consciousness are often indirectly the antecedents to such movements. But how if I attempt to think of such a series as antecedent to all actions throughout the universe, to the motions of the multitudinous stars through space, to the revolution of all their planets around them, to the gyration of all these planets on their axes, to the infinitely multiplied physical processes going on in each of these suns and planets? I cannot even think of a series of states of consciousness as causing the relatively small group of actions going on over the earth's surface; I cannot even think of it as antecedent to all the winds and dissolving clouds they bear, to the currents of all the rivers and the grinding action of all the glaciers; still less can I think of it as antecedent to the infinity of processes simultaneously going on in all the plants that cover the globe, from tropical palms down to polar lichens, and in all the animals that roam among them, and the insects that buzz about them. Even to a single small set of these multitudinous terrestrial changes, I cannot conceive as antecedent a series of states of consciousness,—cannot conceive it as causing the hundred thousand breakers that are at this instant curling over the shores of England. How, then, is it possible for me to conceive an 'Originating Mind,' which I must represent to myself as a series of states of consciousness, being antecedent to the infinity of changes simultaneously going on in worlds too numerous to count, dispersed throughout a space which baffles imagination."¹

Mr.
Spencer's
view
of conscious-
ness is
deliberate.

We thus find that the view which Mr. Spencer takes of consciousness is deliberate. At various times, and in many ways he has declared that "consciousness cannot be in two distinct states at the same time." From the publication of the *First Principles*, in 1862, on to the publication of the article in the *Nineteenth Century*, he has never wavered in this assertion, and has made it the main

¹ *Popular Science Monthly*, July, 1872. Quoted in *The Philosophy of Herbert Spencer*, by B. P. Bowne, A.B., p. 117, 8, 9. Phillips & Hunt, New York, 1881.

support of his agnosticism. The position has such grave consequences, not only with respect to religion, but to science, and to the possibility of knowledge generally, that it was necessary to set forth Mr. Spencer's view in his own words.

II.

MR. SPENCER'S DISREGARD OF HIS OWN ANALYSIS OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

It seems, however, that Mr. Spencer has the power of forgetting his own deepest views to an unusual degree. The consciousness which he has brought down to the vanishing point of a single state, has strange expansive power, and is equal to any demand made on it. In the first edition of the *First Principles* there is a preface containing in outline Mr. Spencer's "system of Philosophy." He there issues a prospectus of the various works which are to form the system. Most of these works have been published. Year by year Mr. Spencer has toiled, and we have before us a series of works which has carried into effect the purpose formed by him long ago. He claims to have reached conclusions of great generality and truth regarding all that can be known by man. In particular he believes himself to have unified our knowledge, and to have framed a formula, adequate to express all orders of change

What the consciousness of Mr. Spencer has been able to do.

If a consciousness like Mr. Spencer's can do so much, what may not a greater consciousness effect?

in their general order, whether these changes be astronomic, geologic, biologic, psychologic, or sociologic. We must infer that this formula answers to a state of consciousness on the part of Mr. Spencer. There can be no other conclusion, for "consciousness cannot be in two distinct states at the same time." We do not at present express our wonder at the assumption that a series of states of consciousness can conceive a law which can express all orders of change in itself and beyond itself. It is sufficiently marvellous: but our present purpose is to place the achievement of Mr. Spencer alongside of what he regards as inconceivable. He cannot conceive how a series of states of consciousness can be the antecedent of all the changes he knows to be going on in earth and sea and sky. Why not, if a single state of consciousness is equal to the construction and conception of the formula of evolution? If the law of all orders of change can be grasped in a single state of consciousness, why may not the changes themselves also be? That the law of evolution may be grasped by consciousness is manifest from the fact that Mr. Spencer complains of Professor Tait and Mr. Matthew Arnold, because, owing to defective training, they "are unable to frame ideas answering to the words in which evolution at large is expressed." It is possible, then, if we are rightly trained, to frame ideas which will correspond to

the formula of evolution. But this is a great feat on the part of a consciousness which can only be in a single state at a time. If a single state can do so much, what may not the whole series be able to accomplish, more particularly if it should ever become aware of itself as a series. The states of consciousness of Mr. Spencer have been able to act as antecedent to all the feelings, volitions, thoughts, which have found expression in the volumes before us ; may not there be other states of consciousness of a larger order equal to the production of changes on a greater scale ? If Mr. Spencer would only consider what a burden he lays on a consciousness which can only exist in a single state at a time, he would do one of two things ; either he would revise his description of consciousness, and make it more adequate to the task required of it, or he would despair of acquiring knowledge of any kind, and land himself in utter scepticism. At present the whole pyramid of his synthetic philosophy stands on the small end, and is poised in unstable equilibrium on a single state of consciousness, and must fall with the first breeze that blows.

What Mr. Spencer would do if he considered the burden he lays on consciousness in a single state.

We naturally ask if consciousness can only exist in a single state at a time, as Mr. Spencer constantly affirms, how it is possible for us to be conscious of more states than one ? But Mr. Spencer as constantly affirms the latter as he does the former. "To be known as unlike," he says,

If consciousness be what Mr. Spencer says it is, reasoning is impossible.

“conscious states must be known in succession,” and he has no explanation of the puzzle how they can be. The only explanation we have been able to find is the following :—

“By a process of observation we find that our states of consciousness segregate into two independent aggregates, each held together by some principle of continuity within it. The principle of continuity, forming into a whole the joint states of consciousness, moulding and modifying them by some unknown energy, is distinguished as the ego ; while the non-ego is the principle of continuity holding together the independent aggregate of vivid states.”¹

Mr. Spencer as an observer can do what he has said consciousness cannot do.

We shall perhaps find a clue to the inconsistencies of Mr. Spencer's reasoning if we look closely at this passage. For we have been utterly puzzled to discover how a single state of consciousness could compare, abstract, generalize, and perform the operations ascribed to it by Mr. Spencer. The key to the mystery will be found in the opening clause of the foregoing quotation : “by a process of observation we find” Mr. Spencer postulates a disinterested observer, who can look calmly down on consciousness, and as a “spectator” keep an account of the process of segregation into aggregates. The qualifications of this observer are of a most distinguished order. He can compare, remember,—in short, he has all the attributes which Mr. Spencer denies to the ego itself. For the most part Mr. Spencer

¹ *Psychology*, Vol. II., p. 487.

identifies himself with the disinterested observer who looks on, and keeps a register of the changes of the universe, and the law which regulates them. As such he is present at the rude beginnings of things; as such he observes all the successive differentiations and integrations which have taken place; as such he has marked the place where memory begins, and has set it down by the clock as the moment when the organic structure fails to correspond with the environment, and therefore brought memory to its help,—a feeble substitute, but a necessary one: as such he prophesies of a future when the correspondence between organism and environment will be again complete, and remembrance of the past shall be needed no more.

It is because he so often occupies the place of the disinterested observer that Mr. Spencer finds he can reduce the ego to a series of states of consciousness. If it were more than this, the result would be rather inconvenient for his philosophy. If he were compelled to regard consciousness as an agent, capable of interaction with other agents in a related world, he would have to widen his calculus, and could no longer hope to express all changes in terms of matter and motion. On the other hand, by regarding consciousness as a series of states, which are dependent for their existence and for the order of

Mr.
Spencer's
denial
of per-
sonality
necessary
for his
system.

their succession on causes beyond themselves, he has been able to show a plausible possibility for the truth of his philosophy. But he purchases the possibility at a great cost. For there is not a single argument in any of Mr. Spencer's works, which does not imply the opposite of his deliberate and repeated statement that consciousness can only exist in a single state at a time. We may take any argument we like,—we may choose at random. Take the following from the chapter on "The Universal Postulate":—

"If, having touched a body in the dark, and having become instantly conscious of some extension as accompanying the resistance, I wish to decide whether the proposition—'whatever resists has extension'—expresses a cognition of the highest certainty, how do I do it? I endeavour to think away the resistance. I think of resistance, and endeavour to keep extension out of thought. I fail absolutely in the attempt."¹

Yet in the
denying of
it he
affirms it.

One would like to ask Mr. Spencer how the mental operation described in the foregoing paragraph is possible. For he makes a distinction between himself, the thinking person, and the thoughts which he thinks. He distinguishes between himself and the states of consciousness which he has. He assumes that he can pass from one state of consciousness to another, and back again, and have a vivid feeling somehow of the likeness or unlikeness between the two. It would appear, therefore, that Mr. Spencer assumes that

¹ *Psychology*, Vol. II., pp. 406, 407.

consciousness can be in three states at the same time, if not in more. For every judgment involves at least three states: two states which are compared, and a third state which affirms the agreement or disagreement between the other two.

We are anxious to observe that this remark is based on the procedure of Mr. Spencer himself, while he is describing the process of reasoning, as a spectator, and apparently in forgetfulness of what he has said about consciousness. We are not unmindful of all that he has written regarding the genesis of consciousness, nor of the principle of association which he calls segregation. But no more in his hands than in the hands of Stuart Mill has the principle of association shown itself equal to the task laid upon it. For it is evident that, if the principle of the association were adequate to explain our mental life, we should never have been able to ask how and why ideas or states of consciousness associate themselves together. To ask such a question shows that we have somehow got beyond the principle of association, which would be impossible if association could explain everything. The theory of Mr. Spencer, which simply substitutes the experience of the race for the experience of the individual, has not altered in any degree the nature of the problem. Even if we were able to trace the steps by which consciousness grew to what it is at present, that would not help us much

The principles of association cannot explain our mental life.

in determining the nature of consciousness as it now is. Before entering on this topic, however, we shall seek to make it clear that Mr. Spencer's account of consciousness is inadequate. We mean, of course, his formal analysis of it. For when we pass from that, and have regard only to what consciousness is able to accomplish, we find in the works of Mr. Spencer ample testimony to self as a permanent activity, and to the synthetic unity of self-consciousness as the permanent unity, to which all the experiences we have is constantly referred. Conscious states—past, present, and future—are bound together and formed into unity, because they are states of the personal self, who knows itself as present in all the variety of its experience.

Quotation
from Lotze.

Let us take in this relation the following quotation from Lotze:—

“To whatever act of thought we direct our attention, we never find that it consists in the mere presence of two ideas *a* and *b* in the same consciousness, but always in what we call a Relation of one idea to the other. After this relation has been established, it can in its turn be conceived as a third idea *C*; but in such case *C* is neither on the one hand homogeneous with *a* and *b*, nor is it a mere mechanical effect of interactions which in accordance with some definite law have taken place between the two as psychological processes with definite magnitudes and definitely various natures. We may take as the simplest examples of what I mean, the identification and the distinction of two ideal contents. If we assume *a* and *b* identical with each other, then unquestionably the idea *a* is present twice over in our mind; but the only result to which this circumstance can lead us, on mechanical analysis, will be either that the two ideas must count as one, because they exactly cover each other,

or that as similar affections of the soul they will become fused into a third idea of greater strength, or that they simply remain apart without any result at all. But that which we call the comparison of them, which leads to the idea of their identity *C*, consists neither in the mere fact of their co-existence, nor in their fusion : it is a new and essentially single act of the soul, in which the soul holds the two ideas side by side, passes from one to the other, and is conscious of experiencing no change in its condition, or in the mode of its action during or by reason of that passage from the one idea to the other.

“Again : let us compare two different ideas *a* and *b*, red and yellow. Two external *stimuli*, which acting by themselves would have awakened severally one of the two sensations, might acting simultaneously coalesce in the nerve, through which they propagate themselves still as physical states, into a third excitation intermediate between the two, so as to occasion in the soul only a third simple sensation. But two ideas which have once arisen as ideas in the soul never experience this sort of fusion. If it were to occur, if the distinctive experience of the two ideas were to vanish, all opportunity and possibility of comparison, and therewith as a remoter consequence, all possibility of thought and knowledge would vanish also. For clearly all relation depends upon preservation in consciousness of the different contents unfalsified by any interactions of one upon the other : the single undivided energy of thought which is to comprehend them must find them as they are in themselves, so that passing to and fro between them it may be conscious of the change which arises in its own condition in the transition.”¹

This account of the nature of comparison differs from that of Mr. Spencer in only one respect. But the one point of difference is vital. Lotze postulates an active soul which can compare its ideas one with another, and affirm or deny their identity. But the postulate of Lotze, reasonable though it seems, evidently puts Mr. Spencer into

Differs from Mr. Spencer in one vital point.

¹ Lotze, *Logic*, p. 474. English Translation, Clarendon Press.

Self-know-
ledge the
postulate
of all
knowledge.

a state of uncontrollable alarm. "If we say this we manifestly imply that the ego is an entity."

Well, suppose we do, what then? It will certainly have grave consequences for the philosophy of Mr. Spencer, but no other serious results which we can see. For it is the one postulate which makes knowledge and experience possible and intelligible, as it is the postulate on which Mr. Spencer continually acts, as we have seen, whenever he describes any process of thought. The only unity of experience which we can possibly have is that which refers all experience to a conscious self, which is the abiding subject of them all. For any possible theory of knowledge assumes the reality of self. If we are not sure of our own existence we are sure of nothing. We are certain of our own identity also; that we are ourselves and not some other. But this is the precise certainty which Mr. Spencer in terms denies, even while he recognizes the existence of self as constantly as any one can do.

One great difficulty which besets the critic of Mr. Spencer's philosophy lies in the fact that people will scarcely believe that he actually holds such opinions, unless they themselves are students of his works. Denying as he actually does the existence and activity of self, it is scarcely credible that he should as constantly affirm it. Yet so it is. If we take his chapter on "the Composition of

Mind," and read therein the way in which, according to him, mind is built up, we shall be surprised to find that mind is postulated to preside over its own genesis. For example:—

In Mr. Spencer's account of the genesis of mind, mind is postulated to preside over its own genesis and growth.

"To complete this general conception it is needful to say that as with feelings, so with the relations between feelings. Parted so far as may be from the particular pairs of feelings, and pairs of groups of feelings they severally unite, relations themselves are perpetually segregated. From moment to moment relations are distinguished from one another in respect of the degrees of contrast between their terms, and the kinds of contrast between their terms; and each relation, while distinguished from various concurrent relations, is assimilated to previously-experienced relations like itself."¹

On the previous page he speaks of sensations being at once known as unlike other sensations that limit them in space and time. He speaks of sensations as known, and of relations as recognized before there is any conscious subject present to act in these capacities. For by his hypothesis he regards the subject as not yet built up nor come to consciousness—and yet the subject is present, active, knowing, recognising, segregating. He has to account for feeling, thought, memory, and he accounts for them by a theory which at the same time affirms and denies the activity of thought and of the thinking being. When we question Mr. Spencer further as to the origin of all these changes, which go to form the ego, we find no other account than

¹ *Psychology*, Vol. I., p. 183.

this, that the principle of segregation lies not in the conscious subject, but in the nervous system. On the nervous system, as it has been developed through all the past, lies the burden of accounting for all the states of mind, and for all the processes of thinking. He sometimes seems to attribute to the nervous system the power of recognising relations of appreciating differences, and of storing up memories, which most other philosophers regard as operations of the conscious ego. Even if we attribute to nerve vesicles this extraordinary power we simply remove the difficulty one step further back, and we get no nearer a solution of the problem; and we have the added absurdity of attributing to the nervous system all the results and characteristics of mind.

We return now to the statement of Mr. Spencer in his recent article.¹ We have seen that the formal doctrine that consciousness is formed of successive states, is repeated by Mr. Spencer in almost all his works, and we have seen also that he is, notwithstanding, constrained to speak as if he believed in a self distinct from, and cognisant of, all the successive states of consciousness. Suppose that instead of using the phrase "successive states of consciousness," we were to use the phrase conscious self in the extract quoted above, Mr. Spencer's argument becomes meaningless.

Mr. Spencer's argument meaningless if, for states of consciousness, we substitute "conscious self," "conscious person."

¹ *Nineteenth Century*, January, 1884.

“Such a conception of the divine consciousness is irreconcilable both with the unchangeableness otherwise alleged, and with the omniscience otherwise alleged. For a consciousness constituted of ideas and feelings caused by objects and occurrences, cannot be simultaneously occupied with all objects and all occurrences throughout the universe.”

We purpose to construct a parallel sentence : Illustration.
 “The conception of a consciousness which is formed of successive states, is irreconcilable with the permanence otherwise claimed, and with the knowledge otherwise claimed by Mr. Spencer. For a consciousness constituted of ideas and feelings caused by objects and occurrences cannot have been simultaneously occupied with, or even successively occupied with the thoughts contained in his works. To believe in Mr. Spencer as the permanent subject who produced all these works, would be to stop short with verbal propositions.” A similar series of propositions may readily be framed to run parallel with all the other propositions in the quoted paragraph, and the result would be that we have no right to speak of emotion, of will, or of intelligence in connection with Mr. Spencer. We cannot speak of him without attributing to him a selfhood which has persisted from the publication of the *First Principles* onward, and this is precisely what he will not permit us to do. Still we can hardly be sure even of this, for we remember that the persistence of force rests for final proof on the persistence of consciousness ; “and our inability to

conceive matter and motion suppressed, is our inability to suppress consciousness itself." Consciousness cannot be suppressed, and persists, it would appear, and yet can only be in a single state at a time!

We may, however, be allowed to exhaust the possibility of the known before we take refuge in the unknowable. We are entitled to try what can be accomplished by a knowing subject who knows itself as an agent in all the forms of its activity, before we pass into the unknown, and postulate an energy which is the hypothetical cause of our conscious states. No one ever laid stronger stress on the separation between subject and object than Mr. Spencer has. It is an antithesis which according to him can never be transcended; and yet Mr. Spencer constantly transcends this antithesis, and identifies the two in the unknowable energy in which we live and move and have our being. We can only speak of matter, he tells us, in terms of mind, and of mind in terms of matter; and this he maintains, while he also maintains that there can be no resemblance between a feeling and a motion, or between a thought and a material fact. The passage we now quote is exceedingly curious:—

Incon-
sistencies
of Mr.
Spencer.

"No effort of imagination can enable us to think of a shock, however minute, except as undergone by an entity. We are compelled, therefore, to postulate a substance of mind that is affected before we can think of its affections. But we can form no notion of a substance of Mind absolutely divested of attributes

connoted by the word substance; and all such attributes are abstracted from our experience of material phenomena. Expel from the conception of mind every one of these attributes by which we distinguish an external something from an external nothing, and the conception of mind becomes nothing. If to escape this difficulty we repudiate the expression 'state of consciousness,' and call each undecomposable feeling 'a consciousness,' we merely get out of one difficulty into another. A consciousness, if not the state of a thing, is itself a thing. And as many different consciousnesses as there are, so many different things there are. How shall we think of these so many independent things, having their differential characters, when we have excluded all conceptions derived from external phenomena?"¹

The last question can be answered very simply. When we have excluded all conceptions derived from external phenomena, we can think of conscious persons in conceptions derived from internal phenomena. Usually we describe a thing in terms of the modes of its activity, and we say a thing is where it acts, and the qualities of a thing are the modes of its action. We therefore take one of the sentences in the above quotation, and amend it to read as follows:—"Expel from the conception of mind every one of the attributes by which we distinguish an external something from an external nothing, and the conception of mind will still retain that which is its essential characteristic. It will still be a thing which feels and thinks and wills. It will still remain conscious of itself, and have the power of looking before and after."

Conception of mind positive, not negative; and in terms of mind, not of matter.

¹ *Psychology*, Vol. I., p. 626.

This is indeed the final statement of Mr. Spencer's favourite theory, that our knowledge consists of equations worked out with symbols, which can never be known save as symbols. It is his final statement of the necessity which compels us to "find the value of x in terms of y , and of y in terms of x ," and to go on so for ever without coming nearer to a solution. But we have seen that when we abstract all that we have gained from material phenomena, we still have a conception of mind,—and a positive conception, not a negative,—which can be explained in terms of affections of mind itself, and which can be realized in consciousness.

Conscious-
ness of self
the key
of the
position.

We have dealt with this analysis of consciousness at some length, for it is the key of the position. And Mr. Spencer knows this to be true. Hence the great trouble he has taken, and hence also the necessity under which he lies of returning to the question again and again, in order to give fresh strength to the proof of it. The proof has failed in every essential particular. It cannot even be stated, except by implicitly affirming what is in terms denied. The pre-supposition of all knowledge is the knowledge of self; and the first unity of things is the unity which refers all things to a personal self, as the abiding subject of all possible experience.

III.

MR. SPENCER'S FIRST PRINCIPLES NOT UNIVERSAL AND NECESSARY.

From this point onwards, we now proceed ; and as we go on we shall find occasion to challenge the competency of Mr. Spencer's reasoning on many occasions. We find in particular, that Mr. Spencer's account of the forms of thought, and of the necessities of thought, to be most inadequate. The long controversy between associationalists and intuitionists has been decided, and decided in favour of the latter. As far as the individual is concerned, Mr. Spencer acknowledges that there are forms of intuition which are transcendental.

Mr. Spencer's account of the forms of thought.

"If at a birth there exists nothing but a passive receptivity of impressions, why is not a horse as educable as a man ? Should it be said that language makes the difference, then why do not the cat and dog, reared in the same household, arrive at equal degrees and kinds of knowledge ?"¹

The question is unanswerable; but Mr. Spencer comes to the help of the associationalists, and endeavours to reconcile the traditional experience doctrine with the doctrine of true forms of thought. The reconciliation is attained through the widening of the meaning of experience. Mr. Spencer has indefinitely lengthened the time through which

Irrational and inadequate.

¹ *Psychology*, Vol. I. p. 468.

experience may act, and through which habit may grow into necessity.

"The human brain is an organised register of infinitely numerous experiences received during the evolution of life, or rather during the evolution of that series of organisms through which the human organism has been reached. The effects of the most uniform and frequent of these experiences have been successively bequeathed, principal and interest, and have slowly mounted to that high intelligence which lies latent in the brain of the infant, which the infant in after-life exercises, and perhaps strengthens or further complicates, and which, with minute additions, it bequeaths to future generations."¹

The
meaning
of the
proposition
that
experience
can evolve
intelligence.

Let us see clearly what is meant by the proposition that experience can evolve intelligence. It is quite true that a man can inherit from his ancestors constitutional peculiarities of disposition and temper. It is another thing altogether to assume, as Mr. Spencer does, that modes of thought—fixed forms of knowledge—can be transmitted or inherited. Unless the forms of thought were already implicit in experience, there seems no possibility of their ever emerging from experience. If these forms are already in the mind, they can readily be applied to the organization of experience; and we can thus understand how common experience is possible. For the mass of sensations which any one may have comes to him in one way, and to another man in another way, and can never generate out of themselves the forms which are to make them an intelligible experience.

¹ *Psychology*, Vol. I. p. 471.

It is therefore no solution of the problem to say that forms of thought which are *a priori* to the individual are *a posteriori* to the race. The problem is how to account for experience, and the answer is that experience is possibly because of the activity of the subject. But Mr. Spencer assumes that the experience of the individual is one thing, and the experience of the race is another. For he acknowledges that experience does presuppose mental activity—in the case of the individual, but not in the case of the race. He gains time, no doubt, by the supposition; but he has not sought to explain how the mere lapse of time can alter the meaning of experience, and what is needed is an explanation of experience as we have it ourselves.

Experience cannot evolve forms of thought.

That there are certain forms of mental activity we may therefore take as granted by all kinds of schools. Mr. Spencer insists on them no less than others. He has no doubt discarded those forms, which by the consent of philosophers have usually been regarded as intuitions of the mind. It is universally conceded, however, that the mind has the power of knowing some things to be true, without any process of verification. There are truths which are universal and necessary, which are seen to be true as soon as they are understood. Experience does not make them true, for the truth of them is independent of experience, and by means of them unconnected sensations become orderly thought.

Forms of mental activity.

Necessary
truth not
the result
of habit.

How do we come by these universal and necessary truths? Mr. Spencer's reply is, that they are the result of habit.

"Being the constant and infinitely-repeated elements of thought, they must become the automatic elements of thought—the elements of thought which it is impossible to get rid of—'the form of intuition.'"

Obviously, however, the conception of automatic elements does not help us. For we can never rise above automatism, and can only assert of our primary beliefs that we have experienced them, and we can say nothing more. As Professor Bowne says:—

Quotation
from
Professor
Bowne.

"By Mr. Spencer's own principles, our subjective inability to get rid of these intuitions, is no proof of their objective validity. The inability results entirely from habit. If we had formed other habits, we should have thought otherwise. Besides, Mr. Spencer is the last man who should appeal to our necessary beliefs in support of any thing, for no one has done them greater violence. We have already seen how he insists upon the duality of subject and object as the most fundamental datum of thought, and one which it is impossible for us to transcend; yet in spite of the impossibility, Mr. Spencer declares them one. He further insists that no effort will enable us to think of thought and motion as alike: yet he assumes it as a first principle, that they are identical. We inevitably believe that personality is more than a bundle of feelings; but Mr. Spencer turns this belief out of doors without ceremony. We cannot help thinking that we see things as they are, that the qualities we attribute to them are really in them; but this belief too, Mr. Spencer cannot abide. There is scarcely a deliverance of our mature consciousness which Mr. Spencer has not insulted and denied. However, something must be saved in the midst of this universal denial, or the universe would vanish in the abyss of nihilism: and accordingly Mr. Spencer asks us to grant

him objective existence, and an infinite force, on the sole testimony of the same mind which he has loaded with opprobrium as a false witness. He insists upon these things because he cannot start his system without them ; he denies all the rest, because they are hostile to his system. Can anything be more convenient than this privilege of taking what we like and rejecting what we like ? Who could not build up a system if we could indulge in this little thing ? We cannot grant it, however. The elementary affirmations of the mind must stand or fall together, for no one has any better warrant than the rest.”¹

Mr. Spencer has, however, got a number of first principles of his own, which he has promoted to the place formerly occupied by the universal and necessary truths he has sought to discredit. These first principles of his are the ultimate generalizations of science; conclusions reached by observation and experiment, and by reasoning based on the results of these. These results have been reached by assuming the stability of the system with which they deal. And physicists are careful to tell us so. There is no diversity of opinion among men who are competent to speak of natural philosophy. We shall quote only one testimony from one of the latest text-books on physics; a testimony which might be endlessly repeated.

Mr.
Spencer's
first
principles.

“It cannot be too strongly insisted on that these general principles, the Constancy of Nature, the Law of Causality, Galileo's principle, the Three Laws of Motion, the Indestructibility of Matter and of Energy, are of no value for us except in so far as they are supported by experimental evidence. They are grouped together here, for the statement of them is necessary

Generalisa-
tions of
science
not first
principles.

¹ *The Philosophy of Herbert Spencer*, pp. 216, 217. New York, 1881.

for comprehension of the results which have been obtained through their aid. We are not here called upon to go through the steps by which they have been arrived at, but we must bear in mind that no *a priori* deduction of them by any metaphysical reasoning is for a moment admissible. The doctrine of the Conservation of Energy is very simple when stated as the result of experiment, and its simplicity has led to statements that the contrary is unthinkable, and that a belief in this doctrine is deeply grounded in the constitution of the mind of man; but all conclusions derived from such reasoning must be regarded with suspicion, for we must take warning by the example of the ancients, who believed circular motions to be perfect, and heavy bodies to fall faster than light ones, until experimental evidence was adduced to the contrary."¹

View of
scientific
men.

The process described by Mr. Daniell as illegitimate, is the process pursued by Mr. Spencer in his *First Principles*. The second part of the *First Principles* may be described as an attempt to transform the widest generalizations of science into *a priori* principles, and the attempt must be characterized as a failure. For the results of science have reference to the particular system, which as a matter of fact we have learnt to know. As a system, the finite world we know is of a particular kind. There are definite forces which interact with each other, in ways which may be known, measured, and expressed in mathematical formulæ. But the only way we have of knowing these forces is by way of observation and experiment. This is proven both by the success of the experimental method, and by the well-known failure of the method which

¹ *Daniell's Text-Book of Physics*, p. 8.

in a disguised form has been sanctioned by Mr. Spencer.

Foremost of the laws of the knowable, as enunciated by Mr. Spencer, is the law of evolution. The law of evolution. Now we wish to say, that with regard to the theory of evolution as enunciated by Mr. Darwin we do not profess to speak. That theory may be held in such a form as to have no dangerous consequences for philosophy or theology. But the theory of Mr. Spencer, with its far-reaching consequences, is altogether different from the scientific theory of Mr. Darwin, with its limited range and carefully guarded statements. Even Mr. Darwin's theory can never from the nature of the case rise beyond the dignity of a good working hypothesis, an hypothesis attended with many difficulties. But the view taken by Mr. Spencer may be disproved, and shown to be an untenable hypothesis.

The starting-point of Mr. Spencer's law of evolution is found in the science of embryology. "It is settled beyond dispute," he says, "that organic evolution consists in a change from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous." Homogeneousness not to be found. This law of organic evolution is extended to all changes whatsoever, and is made the law of all evolution. Now, one would like to know what is meant by homogeneousness. The acorn under favourable conditions becomes an oak; and from

the minute jelly-like cell the completed organism grows. But in what sense can the acorn or the cell be said to be homogeneous? Only in that sense in which all things are alike in the absence of light. It is obvious that there are differences present in the germ-cell, or why does one become a horse and another a man? To the eye of reason the germ-cell is as complex as the completed structure. The one is the other made visible.

The same remark applies to the law of evolution at large. For homogeneousness is never defined by Mr. Spencer, nor is it ever present in any of the illustrations he uses. There are differences, even in the diffused state of matter postulated by the Nebular hypothesis; and differences are present everywhere. In fact the difficulty with regard to evolution is this, granted homogeneousness to account for differentiation. And yet differentiation, or variation, is just that part of evolution which is supposed to account for every thing, and which itself is unaccountable.

Differentia-
tion un-
accountable.

It certainly is quite unaccounted for in the system of Mr. Spencer. We have no rational account of whence it comes, or whither it goes: only this, that differences arise somehow. One of two courses was open to Mr. Spencer: either to admit that all differences are present at the outset, in which case homogeneousness vanishes; or else to assume a power outside of the homogeneous,

which can institute changes, preside over them, and guide them on to a purposed end. The actual course taken by him can have arisen only from lack of clearness of thought.

Let us glance for a moment at these ultimate generalizations of science which Mr. Spencer has elevated into first principles. There is quite a number of them, but we can only look at one or two. The law of the conservation of energy has become in his hands the persistence of force. As we know the conservation of energy from the researches of natural philosophers, it is intelligible, and has reference to the universe as a conservative system. Science teaches that energy is either kinetic or potential,—may be the energy of motion, or the energy of position. Energy is being incessantly stored as virtual power, and restored as actual motion. The sum of energy is a constant quantity, but the amount of it which is available is continually decreasing. One result of the doctrine of the conservation of energy is that we are dealing with a finite system which has had a beginning, and will have an end. The universe is likened by Balfour Stewart to a burning candle.

Energy a
constant
quantity.

“We are forced to realize a precise instant before which there were no phenomena, such as those with which we are acquainted, and since which the phenomena due to the relations of matter and energy have been occurring: while in the future we have to contemplate a moment at which the whole physical universe will have run itself down like the weights of a clock, and after

Degrada-
tion of
energy

which an inert uniformly warm mass will represent the whole material order of things."¹

This doctrine of the conservation of energy is named by Mr. Spencer "the persistence of force," and the nature of it changed in the naming. We make bold to say that no physicist will recognize the scientific doctrine of energy in the strange presentation of it given by Mr. Spencer, while a mediæval schoolman would hail it with delight as an old friend with a new face. "*Ex nihilo nihil fit*" is the olden maxim, which has been renamed the persistence of force, and raised to the position of universal datum, from which all else is deduced. It was a barren maxim in the olden time, nor is it likely to be more fruitful now. Mass and energy are real things, which cannot be increased or diminished, but force is only an abstraction which has no corresponding reality in the world of actual experience. Of course the concrete language of physicists would not lend itself readily to the uses of a philosophy. Had he used their language it would not have been easy for Mr. Spencer to speak of matter and motion as forms of force, and of force as the ultimate of ultimates.

Force an
unreal
abstraction.

Distinction
between
gravitation
and other
forces.

We here again come across the idea of the homogeneous. But the forces we know are far from being homogeneous. It is true indeed that a number of the physical forces are convertible into

¹ *Daniell's Text-Book of Physics*, p. 45.

each other; that light, heat, electricity, etc., may pass each into each and back again. But there is one force which is unique in its nature and action. Other forces are propagated with a finite velocity,—the force of gravitation seems to act instantaneously over the whole universe; other forces depend on many conditions for their action and existence,—gravitation acts on all bodies alike under all conditions. No obstacle stays its action, or can hinder it from proceeding in the straight line between the centre of attracting masses. It cannot be exhausted nor increased, but remains constant, every body attracting every other body in proportion to the quantity of matter in it. It is unlike all other forces that we know, and yet seems to be the universal condition and measure of them all. It may be remarked here that the work of physicists is not yet finished; and the doctrine of the conservation of energy, and of the correlation of force, needs a good deal of illustration yet.

When Mr. Spencer speaks of the persistence of force, we are therefore entitled to ask what kind of force? Is it a force like gravitation, which is constant, unchangeable, incessant, and inexhaustible? or is it a force like light, heat, or electricity, which is limited in its manifestations to certain states of body? Is it a force like life, limited to certain forms of organised matter? or a force like mental action, which appears only in more limited forms

Kinds of
force.

What we
know is a
system of
forces.

still? It affords us no rational explanation of the world in which we live, or of our own experience, to hypostatise a verbal abstraction, and call it by the name of force. What we do know is not force, but a system of forces, bound together in definite relations; and these relations can only be rightly understood, or understood at all, when we bring in the purpose of the system, and regard it as a system meant to be conservative.

Correlation
of forces.

It is well to point out also that, while the force of gravitation is used as the final measure of energy, and we measure energy by foot-pounds, yet the force of gravity does not pass into other kinds of force, or if it does, it increases not, nor diminishes. The energy of the sun, which now comes to us as light, as heat, or in other forms, will by and by be exhausted. The molecular movements in the body of the sun will cease, and the sun will no longer be a source of that kind of energy. But even then gravitation will remain, for the force of gravitation depends on the mass and the distance, and will continue to act in a dead universe. The doctrine of the correlation of forces has been established because modes of motion pass into each other, and because we assume that the system of things is a closed system. But the doctrine of the correlation of forces, excellent though it be as a working hypothesis, and proven true of certain modes of motion, is

yet not demonstrated true of gravitation, for example.

It may be granted that it is very likely true of organic forces, though there is as yet only a strong presumption in its favour. But there is not the shadow of presumption in favour of the correlation of mental and physical forces. We write this advisedly, and in full view of Mr. Spencer's oft-repeated statement to the contrary. One of the strongest of these statements is the following :

“That no idea or feeling arises, save as a result of some physical force expended in producing it, is fast becoming a commonplace of science : and whoever duly weighs the evidence will see that nothing but an overwhelming bias in favour of a pre-conceived theory, can explain its non-acceptance.”¹

We can account for his affirmation of the correlation of the mental and physical forces only by supposing in Mr. Spencer an overwhelming bias in its favour. So far is it from being a commonplace of science that physical force is expended in producing feeling, that the contradictory of it may be regarded as a commonplace of science. Of the many scientific witnesses we might call, we shall content ourselves with the testimony of one, and that one is an ardent supporter of Mr. Spencer's philosophy :—

Mental and
physical
forces
do not
correlate.

“Does the motion *produce* the feeling, in the same sense that heat produces light? Does a given quantity of motion dis-

¹ *First Principles*, p. 280.

Mr. Fiske's
testimony.

appear, to be replaced by an equivalent quantity of feeling? By no means. The nerve-motion, in disappearing, is simply distributed into other nerve-motions in various parts of the body; and these other nerve-motions, in their turn, become variously metamorphosed into motions of contraction in muscles, motions of secretion in glands, motion of assimilation in tissues generally, or into yet other nerve-motions. . . . If the law of the 'correlation of forces' is to be applied at all to the physical processes which go on within the living organism, we are of necessity bound to render our whole account in terms of motion which can be quantitatively measured. Once admit into the circuit of metamorphosis some element—such as feeling—that does not allow of quantitative measurement, and the correlation can no longer be established; we are landed at once in absurdity and contradiction. So far as the correlation of force has anything to do with it, the entire circle of transmutation, from the lowest physico-chemical motion all the way up to the highest nerve-motion, and all the way down again to the lowest physico-chemical motion, must be described in physical terms, and no account whatever can be taken of any such thing as feeling or consciousness."¹

Mr. Fiske's
statement,
if true,
fatal
to Mr.
Spencer's
system.

A bias to the contrary cannot be supposed true of Mr. Fiske, or of Dr. David Ferrier, or Du-Bois-Raymond, or of others who have spoken on the subject, all of whom agree with Mr. Fiske, and disagree with Mr. Spencer. If the statement of Mr. Fiske is true, it is fatal to the system of Mr. Spencer; and if the statement of Mr. Spencer be true, he will have to show its consistency with the conservation of energy. Mr. Spencer shows that strong mental action is accompanied by motion in the blood, as can be seen from a flushed face, and in other ways. But strong mental action ought, on the theory, to be accompanied,

¹ *Darwinism and other Essays*, by John Fiske, p. 72.

not by an evolution, but by a disappearance of force. It may be noticed also that Mr. Spencer's mechanical explanation of the origin and differentiation of the nervous system, by the supposition of motion in the line of least resistance or of greatest traction, or of the resultant between the two, has now been shown to be inconsistent with embryological facts.¹

The teaching of science gives no support to Mr. Spencer's datum of the persistence of force. Science discloses to us the working of a system of forces, which by reason of the activity of their interaction must work themselves out, and cease to exert energy. If we wish to get persistence as a foundation for our thought, we must in thought go outside of the system of interacting forces, and postulate some other kind of power. It is eminently unreasonable to abstract from the various kinds of force which we know, only one phase or aspect, and credit that abstraction with the infinite variety of the system. Still more unreasonable is it to identify the eternal energy with the lowest and simplest kind of energy which we can know. And the most unreasonable course of all is to call it "homogeneous." For neither homogeneous force, nor a homogeneous unity of force can be found either in science or in the works of Mr. Spencer.

The
persistence
of force un-
scientific.

If Mr. Spencer's datum of the persistence of

¹ See *Nature*, Vol. XXII., p. 420.

Mr.
Spencer's
scholastic
dogmas.

Their
resemblance
to the
entities and
quiddities of
the school-
men.

force is doubtful, much more doubtful are the other mental forms, so-called by him, which he deduces from it. The number of these is great. The indestructibility of matter, the continuity of motion, the correlation and equivalence of force, and others. Each chapter closes with an attempt to show that the principle is a direct corollary from the persistence of force, and an *a priori* truth of the highest certainty. What a pity that the discovery had not been made sooner, what endless travail our toiling men of science would have been spared had they known that mere cogitation could have made them masters of the results won by protracted labour and experiment! But on Mr. Spencer by the necessity of his system is laid the harder task of proving that laws which have been discovered by induction, are really *a priori* truths. The laws which he calls *a priori* truths bear a suspicious resemblance to the entities and quiddities of the schoolmen. One of these we have already mentioned, "*ex nihilo nihil fit*" is the scholastic equivalent of the persistence of force and the indestructibility of matter, while the continuity of motion is nothing else than the old doctrine that "nature abhors a vacuum," or "nature never makes a leap." The only way of knowing whether these are or are not true, is to find out. For many ages it was believed as a matter of fact that matter was destructible, and many people believe it still; no doubt this

belief is incorrect. But its incorrectness is not to be demonstrated on *a priori* grounds, but in other ways. Mr. Spencer feels obliged

“to reject a large part of human thinking as not thinking at all, but pseudo-thinking;”

and the reason for rejecting it is that it is inconceivable.

Mr. Spencer rejects a large portion of human thinking as pseudo-thinking because inconceivable.

“Our inability to conceive matter becoming non-existent is immediately consequent upon the nature of thought itself. Thought consists in the establishment of relations. There can be no relation, and therefore no thought framed, when one of the terms is absent from consciousness.”

Now, if this sort of argument is good for Mr. Spencer's purpose, it is good for more. Let us try it with change. Our inability to conceive of change is consequent on the nature of thought itself. Thought consists in the establishment of relations. “Only the permanent can change,” says Kant. But permanence and change cannot be united in the same act of thought. Let us, however, take Mr. Spencer himself. Let us remind him of his own argumentation about motion,¹ and he must acknowledge how vain his argument is about the indestructibility of matter, and how idle his demonstration of the continuity of motion.

Mr. Spencer's argument is good for more than his purpose.

In truth this endeavour to translate ultimate results of science into *a priori* truths is exceedingly dangerous. Science teaches that the universe

¹ *First Principles*, p. 57, etc.

Further
incon-
sistencies.

tends, in virtue of the expenditure of energy, to a state of rest, when all differences of temperature, which are the conditions of motion, shall be merged in identity. In such a state of matters motion will be impossible, and yet Mr. Spencer states that the continuity of motion is an *a priori* truth. Is not this to throw doubt on the nature of our intelligence, and to bring the dicta of intelligence into direct conflict with the system of things?

Continuity
of motion.

The only proof of the continuity of motion which Mr. Spencer gives is derived from the doctrine of the conservation of energy. Molar motion is continued, and passes into molecular motion. And it is difficult to think of motion as discontinuous since this discovery has been made. Men have, however, thought that motion was discontinuous, and could be lost. They could never have thought so if the continuity of motion were an *a priori* truth, like the truth that two and two make four. If Mr. Spencer should say "that the explanation is that in this, as in countless other cases, men have supposed to think what they do not think," we reply by pointing to the opinion of Newton, who was certainly a competent thinker in matters of natural philosophy. We quote from his *Optics*:—

"From which instance it appears that motion may be gained or lost. By reason of the tenacity of fluids, and attrition of their parts, and the weakness of elastic force in solid bodies,

motion is more readily lost than gained, and is continually decreasing." ¹

We quote this statement simply for the sake of showing that the principle of the continuity of motion cannot be an *a priori* truth, whatever kind of truth it may be. It has reference to the system of things which we actually find in existence, and is a deduction from the thought that postulates the stability of the system.

The truth is that Mr. Spencer's highest postulate is not the persistence of force, but the assumption that the present system of things is the only possible system. This assumption can be justified only when we bring in another conception, which Mr. Spencer never uses until he comes to speak of sociology and ethics. The conception of purpose is raised at the very outset of any system, and without it it is impossible to have an intelligent conception of the collocations of matter, or even of the nature of molecular combination, and of the laws of molecular action. The laws of matter are so and so, because they have been made so. In other words, the mechanical explanation of things invariably leads us beyond itself, and lands us in intelligence as the only rational explanation we can by any possibility have. The persistence of force is a barren postulate, as fruitless and as useless as the companion abstraction of "pure being."

Mr.
Spencer's
real
assumption.

¹ *Optics*, p. 341. Ed. 1706.

IV.

THE GROUNDS OF MR. SPENCER'S DOCTRINE OF
THE "UNKNOWABLE."

Test of
truth.

This leads us to the test of truth which Mr. Spencer uses. A proposition is true when its opposite cannot be conceived. We remark, however, that the inconceivableness of the opposite is only one of the marks of universal and necessary truth. It has the disadvantage also of being stated in a negative form. In a positive form, the statement is that *a priori* truths are self-evident as soon as they are seen and understood. The mind asserts the knowledge of them to be true and valid, and self-evident. Mr. Spencer's principle is the same principle in a negative form. We try to think the contrary to be true, and we find it impossible. If the principle be a primitive and universal one, the impossibility to thought of its contradictory is universal.

Its positive
as well as
negative
form.

The advantage of having this test of truth stated in its positive as well as in its negative form lies here. It shows to us our primitive beliefs do not arise from mental weakness, but from mental power. It is not a negation of knowledge arising from our inability to think, but an assertion of mental activity so positive that it carries in itself the consciousness that it is impossible to think the

opposite. Hamilton's theory of mental imbecility, professedly applied by him to explicate the causal judgment, vanishes at once when it is seen that the causal judgment is an act, not of mental weakness, but of mental power.

In the application of this test of knowledge in its negative form, Mr. Spencer varies. Sometimes he means by inconceivable what cannot be pictured in imagination, sometimes what cannot be expressed in a concept, and sometimes what is unthinkable. But the conceivable cannot be limited to the imaginable; if it were, all knowledge expressed in abstract terms would be unreal and untrue. We have positive knowledge of what we mean by the word book, to our imagination we can only picture one particular book. Sometimes Mr. Spencer uses the word inconceivable in this sense; but it is obvious that he only does so when no other test of inconceivability would readily apply.

More frequently, however, he uses the word inconceivable to indicate that which cannot be classed. This is the difficulty which he has himself added to the verbal dexterities he has borrowed from Hamilton and Mansel, and he elaborates it with great delight in the chapter on the *relativity of knowledge*. If we say that the knowledge of the individual precedes the knowledge of the general notion, and the knowledge of the general notion is dependent on the knowledge of the individual, we

Ambiguities
of the term
inconceiv-
able.

only say what every one knows to be true. But Mr. Spencer will not allow us to suppose that we can know a concrete individual unless we can class it under a logical concept. In which case, we may remark, we can never know an individual. We must assert, however, that the concrete individual is the starting-point of thought, and knowledge of the individual precedes the formation of the concept. The qualities of the individual are known before they can be known as characteristics of a kind or class. The procedure of Mr. Spencer is based on the assumption that our knowledge of an individual is derived from the general notion, and can extend no further, and affirms nothing else than we can obtain from the analysis of the concept. This is not the only instance of atavism which we have found in Mr. Spencer's reasoning. It is the method of the schoolmen; and if it be true, there is no possibility of synthetic judgment either *a priori* or *a posteriori*.

The un-
knowable.

In dealing with *The Universal Postulate* of Mr. Spencer, we have been insensibly led on to his doctrine of the "unknowable." To this dogma of his, we now direct attention. At the outset we have to complain that he has applied one measure to the truth of science, and another to the truth of religion. He has endeavoured to prove that the ultimate scientific realities, represented by ultimate scientific ideas, are unknowable because unthink-

able. Mind, matter, space, time, force, are forms of the "unknowable." But this does not prevent Mr. Spencer from dealing with all these realities, or from formulating a certain number of propositions regarding their nature and action. The dread of committing himself to alternate impossibilities has not hindered him from tracing in his own way the genesis of our conceptions of these "unthinkable" realities. But it was a sufficient justification for denying the truth of religious ideas and affirmations, to show that the affirmation of the object of religion committed us "to alternate impossibilities of thought." On his own showing, the truths of religion must have, or may have, as great a relative validity as the truths of science and philosophy.

In conclusion, we shall look at the reasonings by which Mr. Spencer believes himself to have demonstrated that the ultimate reality is utterly unknowable. The reasonings he has excogitated for himself as well as those which he has borrowed from Sir William Hamilton and Dean Mansel, are degraded forms of the antinomies of Kant. They suffered their first degradation when Hamilton changed the positive affirmations of mind into mental weakness, and substituted for the positive judgment of causality the negative conception of being unable to conceive a beginning. They suffered a second degradation

The
antinomies
of Kant.

at the hands of Dean Mansel, and a third degradation at the hands of Mr. Spencer. But what cogency the argument may have is all derived from Kant, and has gained nothing, but rather lost in the hands of the others. The strength of the argument lies here, that from the nature of the reason we necessarily believe in two contradictory propositions. Kant's antinomies are four, and they emerge when we consider the idea of the world. The thesis is that the world is limited in time and space, and the antithesis equally affirms that it is not thus limited. A second antinomy is that the world consists of simple parts, and the antithesis is that no simple substances exist. The third antinomy is, that free will exists, and the antithesis is that it does not exist, but everything happens necessarily under the laws of nature. And the fourth is that an absolute Being exists, and the antithesis is that absolute Being exists nowhere.

Are they
contra-
dictory?

In these antinomies we have the type after which all the argumentation of Hamilton, Mansel, and Spencer has been fashioned. Once we get the model, the manufacture may go on without limit. But the question arises are the antinomies contradictory of each other? and the apostles of the "unknowable" answer in the affirmative. But if we must believe in contradictory propositions, then reason is no longer trustworthy, and cannot be trusted in any affirmation it may happen to make.

Explanation
of anti-
nomies.

The contradiction arises only when we tacitly assume that there is only one kind of being in the universe. If we suppose that there are more kinds of beings than one, then the thesis may be true of one, and the antithesis of another. There is no contradiction when we say that the material universe is limited in time and space, and apply the unlimited not to the universe but to time and space, which cannot be conceived as limited except by further time and space. There is no contradiction if we say that the world is limited, and say that God is unlimited. To pass to the second antinomy, can we rationally affirm both the thesis and antithesis here. I can affirm both of myself. I am conscious of myself persisting in self-identity throughout the years; and I am also conscious of the actions, feelings, thoughts, which are mine. Both sides of the antinomy are realised as complementary of each other, in the unity of self-consciousness. The antinomy is reconciled also in any unity in which opposites meet, or where many qualities manifest the nature of any one thing. The third antinomy finds its solution in the affirmation that some beings are free and others are not free, because some beings are personal and others are impersonal. Freedom and necessity may also be predicated of the same person. I express the antinomy thus, "I am free to bind myself,"—a proposition which at once unites the antinomy, and which everyone knows to

be true. With regard to the fourth antinomy of Kant, which refers to the existence of the absolute and both affirms and denies its existence, we may remark that the contradiction vanishes when we assume that there is an absolute, and that there is a relative, which is rooted and grounded in the absolute.

Thus the exercise of a little common sense will largely set us free from the tyranny of the antinomies of pure reason, and will lead us on to see that reason does not belie itself in its deepest affirmations. What has enabled us to escape from the antinomies of Kant will also lead us out of the dilemmas of Herbert Spencer. Let us take one of the antinomies or contradictions paraded by him :

Examina-
tion of
a specimen
contra-
diction.

“If we now go a step further, and ask what is the nature of the First Cause, we are driven by an inexorable logic to certain further conclusions. Is the First Cause finite or infinite? If we say finite we involve ourselves in a dilemma. To think of the first cause as finite, is to think of it as limited. To think of it as limited, necessarily implies a conception of something beyond its limits : It is absolutely impossible to conceive a thing as bounded, without conceiving a region surrounding its boundaries. What now must we say of this region? If the First Cause is limited, and there consequently lies something outside of it, this something must have no First Cause—must be uncaused. But if we admit that there can be something uncaused, there is no reason to assume a cause for anything.”¹

We place alongside of this the following sentence from Mr. Spencer :

¹ *First Principles*, p. 37.

“Amid the mysteries which become the more mysterious the more they are thought about, there will remain the one absolute certainty, that he is ever in presence of an Infinite and External Energy, from which all things proceed.”¹

The one
absolute
certainty.

We are not aware that any one interested in religion or in philosophy demanded anything more from a First Cause than this. What reason asks from a First Cause is that it be equal to the production of all the effects. It is not necessary for reason to say whether it is limited or unlimited, any more than it is necessary to say that it is black or white. “If we admit that there can be something uncaused, there is no reason to assume a cause for anything.” We do not assume a cause for existence; what reason demands is that every beginning or that every change must have a cause. Cause is necessary to account for beginning and for change, and as the correlative of this axiom it assumes as another principle that there is a being itself unchanged, which is the cause of all changes.

It were tedious to pass through the various contradictions heaped together by Mr. Spencer. More strange than anything we have seen is the affirmation which he makes of the absolute certainty we have of an Infinite and Eternal Energy from which all things proceed. If we were to treat this after the Spencerian fashion, we should have to ask how a conditioned and relative intelli-

¹ *Nineteenth Century*, January, 1884.

gence can attain to absolute certainty? How a being can be called unknowable when we know it to be Infinite and Eternal Energy? When we gather together into one thought all that Mr. Spencer affirms regarding the "unknowable," we find that it is an absolute being, that it is an omnipresent power, that it is incomprehensible, and that it is the proper object of religious reverence, and that we are ever in its presence, and from it all things proceed. Truly we must come to the conclusion that the word "unknowable" is used only in a Spencerian sense. We have only to say further of this Power, that it is conscious spirit, and is intelligent and personal, and we shall have all that is needed for religious life and thought. If we can be absolutely certain that we are in presence of an Eternal Infinite Energy, we can be certain of more. By this affirmation Mr. Spencer has transcended his own manufactured contradictions as much as if he had gone on to transcribe the Creed of Christendom in order to conclude with it his *Nineteenth Century* article.

Summary
and con-
clusion.

We have seen then that Mr. Spencer's objections from the nature of consciousness breaks down when we come to understand what consciousness really means. We have seen that he could not even describe consciousness without implying the continued existence of the self-conscious subject. We have seen also that the self-conscious subject

has definite ways of acting, willing, thinking ; forms into which all its experience falls. We have seen also that Mr. Spencer's attempt to manufacture *a priori* principles, and to change the ultimate generalisations of science into first principles, resulted in failure, because they all involved the stability of the system of things. We have seen also that the "alternate impossibilities" of thought arise only from confounding one kind of being with another ; and in conclusion that the affirmations of Mr. Spencer had only to be extended a little further in order to include all we need.

The contradictions detailed at such length in the opening part of *First Principles* do not prove what Mr. Spencer supposes them to do : on the contrary, they prove only that there are different orders of being, and that our knowledge of being is real, and that the distinction we draw between the absolute and the relative, between independent and dependent being, between personal and impersonal being, is true and valid ; and the contradictions arise only when Mr. Spencer blends in one confusion, and utterly disregards the distinctions which reason draws. If God exists, then reason is in harmony with itself and with reality as known. We have a real knowledge of God, just as we have a real knowledge of ourselves. In neither case do we claim that our knowledge is complete and exhaustive. The mystery of existence may overpass

We have
a real
knowledge
of God.

God has
wrought
and spoken.

Our
knowledge
of God
may be
vindicated
on grounds
of reason.

our knowledge. To-day, as in former days, man must say, "Who can find out the Almighty unto perfection?" And yet, when all is said that can be said about the measureless mystery which wraps us round, and the unexplored heights and depths which are around us on every side, we may rest secure in the persuasion that our knowledge is true and real. Reverence bows low in the presence of the eternal silence; and uplifts itself to hear the voice that breaks the silence. The living God has wrought, and the living God has spoken, and we have heard His voice. We do not need to go back to the time when men built altars to the unknown God, for He whom men did ignorantly worship has been revealed. We do know the God who has revealed Himself in the universe, who is the Author of its beauty, the Upholder of its order, and the Guide of it to its appointed goal. We do know the Redeemer God, the Restorer of the course of the sinful world to eternal purity and peace; we do know the living God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. And though much remain unknown, yet the knowledge is sure, and may be vindicated on grounds of reason, that "of Him, and through Him, and unto Him, are all things. To Him be the glory, for ever. Amen."

MAN NOT A MACHINE,

BUT

A RESPONSIBLE FREE AGENT.

BY THE

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(Being the Bampton Lecture for 1877,)

"THE JESUS OF THE EVANGELISTS," ETC.



THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY :

56, PATERNOSTER ROW ; 65, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD ; AND

164, PICCADILLY.

Argument of the Tract.

THE appeal is made to common sense against the prevalent materialistic, necessitarian philosophy, theological necessitarianism being excluded from the discussion. What is meant by a free agent is explained, and the limits of human freedom are defined. The necessitarian position, that every thing in man is the result of the conjoint action of matter and force, and therefore necessarily what his bodily organization makes him, and nothing more is stated, and that of the believers in man's free agency is defined. Free agency is shown to be the direct affirmation of our consciousness. We are shown to have a power of originating action. The validity of various objections is examined. The truth of free agency is proved from the universal belief of civilized man, especially as it has been registered in the structure of language and from an analysis of duty as affirmed by conscience. Obligation must centre in a Being external to ourselves. Both we ourselves who owe, and the Being to whom we owe, must be possessed of a moral nature, *i.e.*, both must be free agents.

A summary of the testimony of the past experience of mankind to free agency is given. Various materialistic theories on the subject are refuted. The distinction between physical and moral agents, instinctively and universally felt, is pointed out. The issues of the necessitarian philosophy are indicated. The basis of moral obligation according to this philosophy is examined, and what would be the practical effects of utilitarianism, were it generally accepted, set forth. The self-destructive character of necessitarian philosophy, and the fact that God alone can estimate the degree of responsibility attaching to each individual are shown. The confidence is expressed that God will judge and act aright.

MAN NOT A MACHINE,

BUT

A RESPONSIBLE FREE AGENT.



WIDESPREAD philosophy at the present day affirms that there is no distinction between the forces which energize in the material and in the moral universe ;

No distinction between material and moral forces according to a widespread philosophy.

but that both are alike subject to an iron law of necessity. It teaches that man is the result of the conjoint action of those necessary forces of nature, by which his physical frame has been built up, and of the surroundings in the midst of which he is placed ; that he has no power of determining his own actions, but that they are determined for him by the conditions of his birth and his environment ; that he cannot help acting in conformity with the impulse which happens to be the strongest ; and that if all these conditions could be perfectly known, every action of every individual could be predicted beforehand with the same certainty as an astronomer predicts the occurrence of

If this philosophy be true, man is a machine.

an eclipse. From this it follows, if this philosophy is a true account of the realities of things, that man is as much a machine as a steam engine; and that the hitherto accepted idea, that he is a free agent and a responsible moral being, is a delusion.

Reason why the subject cannot be treated with indifference.

As long as paradoxes of this kind are confined to the closets of a few speculators, they may safely be left to be dealt with by the common sense of mankind; but when they are loudly proclaimed on the house-tops, as furnishing the true account of the moral nature of man, upon the authority of a number of well-known and imposing names in philosophy and science, and a system of ethics is erected on them, which is declared to be the destined Gospel of the future, it is impossible any longer to treat the subject with indifference, for it is only too evident that if such views are generally embraced as true they will not only be subversive of Christianity, but of the accepted principles of moral obligation and of the very foundations on which society rests. Let us therefore inquire as briefly as we can into their validity, not in terms of high philosophy, but in such as will be intelligible to men of ordinary understanding. But, inasmuch as great confusion of thought has been introduced into this controversy by a lax use of language, it will be necessary before entering on the argument to lay down clearly what we mean when we affirm that man is a free agent.

What is meant by the affirmation that man is a free agent.

1. We mean that man is not bound by the iron

law by which necessary agents are bound ; but that he is an agent free to adopt, or to forbear adopting, a particular course of action, according to the dictates of his reason ; and that he is capable of choosing between the different impulses and motives which urge him to action, and of acting on one, and of declining to act on others. This power is what we mean when in philosophical language we speak of the freedom of the will.

He is free to adopt or not a particular course.

2. We affirm that man possesses a power of self-determination, that the possession of such a power by an agent is essential to constitute an action moral ; and that without it there can be neither morality nor responsibility. Our position is that the universe consists of two factors : one, consisting of that in which necessary law reigns, and where the agents cannot act otherwise than they do ; the other, where they are capable of exercising choice. To the latter we attribute responsibility, to the former none.

He possesses the power of self-determination.

3. But as necessitarians urge that the doctrine of the freedom of the will is equivalent to affirming that man can act without a motive ; that he has a power of modifying his character according to his pleasure ; that he can pursue any course of action he pleases ; and that it also subjects human action to the dominion of caprice, and even makes man a creator of force, it becomes necessary to lay down clearly the real position which is taken

Allegations of necessitarians.

on all these points by those who affirm that man is a free agent.

Limitations
of human
freedom.

(1.) I observe that in affirming human freedom, it is by no means intended to assert that this freedom is devoid of limitations. All that is intended is, that within certain limits, man possesses such an amount of freedom as is sufficient to constitute him a responsible agent ; and that where his freedom ceases, his responsibility ceases also. What we assert is, that we are capable of choosing between different motives and impulses to action ; and that we are under no constraining necessity to yield to what is commonly called the strongest motive, which, in the language of this philosophy, really means the impulse which, by its gratification, would afford the greatest amount of pleasure.

Where
freedom
ceases re-
sponsibility
ceases.

Different
kinds of
motives.

We also affirm that the power of motives to act on the will cannot be estimated by a common measure, such as the amount of pleasure with which the gratification of this or that impulse is attended ; but that motives differ not only in intensity, but in kind, some appealing to the higher, and some to the lower principles of our nature ; that our reason is capable of discriminating between these different classes of motives, and that our power of volition enables us to choose the higher, though the pleasure which attends their gratification may be less, and to refuse to yield to the lower, though the pleasure with which the gratifi-

cation of them would be attended, would be greater.

(2.) Further, the affirmation of the freedom of the will is by no means equivalent to the affirmation that the will is capable of originating force; all that it affirms is, that it is capable of giving a direction to forces already existing, by diverting them from one direction, and turning them into another, in the same manner as the pointsman acts, who does not create force, but turns it into a particular direction.

The will cannot originate force, but only give direction to existing forces.

We also affirm that an act of volition is the invariable antecedent of all rational action; that our reason is capable of sitting in judgment on the character of our actions, of concentrating our attention on one set of motives, and of withdrawing it from another, in accordance with its judgments, thus rendering it possible for us to act on a higher motive, in preference to a lower and—in the sense above defined—a stronger one; and that our wills after adopting the decisions of our judgments, are capable of calling into activity, and of giving the proper direction to those forces which are necessary to realize them in action. Such an amount of freedom is necessary to constitute man a moral and responsible agent; and this being sufficient, it is unnecessary to claim more.

An act of volition the invariable antecedent of rational action

(3.) The affirmation that man is a free agent, is by no means equivalent to the assertion that he can

A free agent does not act without a motive.

Without an impulse the mind remains passive.

Man is under no compulsion to act in this way or that.

Solicitations of our lower appetites may be rejected.

act without a motive, *i.e.*, without something impelling him to action ; all that it asserts is, that we possess a power of choosing between our different impulses and motives. We fully concede that without an impulse of some kind urging us to action, our minds must continue passive. But our impulses may be of the most divers kinds, and of different degrees of intensity, varying from those which instigate us to the most disinterested acts of self-sacrifice, to those which would impel us to the lowest forms of sensual gratification. In affirming, therefore, the freedom of the will, all that we assert is, that man possesses a power of choosing which of these classes of impulses he will gratify; and that he can restrain those which his reason rejects, and act on those which it approves; in a word, that he is under no compulsion, like animals are, to yield merely to the impulse which happens to be the strongest. Yet we fully admit, that such is the strength of the lower impulses of our nature, that they frequently overbear the decisions of our reason. But even here the principle of responsibility enters; for although the temptation may be strong, yet until the power of self-control has been destroyed by habitually yielding to it, we are conscious that we possess the power of rejecting the solicitations of our lower appetites, if it is our will so to do, and that it is a matter of experience that we at times actually do so.

An analysis of the mode in which temptation to evil gets the better of a man before he becomes utterly depraved, will make this plain. What is the course which it pursues? A desire for some gratification presents itself to the mind. The question immediately arises, shall we yield to the solicitation? Our conscience and moral sense say no, for it is wrong to do so. Our animal appetites say, it is pleasing, and urge us to the gratification. Are we then irresistibly impelled to yield to them? We all know that we are not. It is true that if we continue contemplating the pleasure with which the indulgence of the appetite would be attended, the yielding to the temptation will be the certain consequence. But if we cease to keep our minds fixed on the pleasure, and by a resolute act of will concentrate our attention on the great law of duty, this result need not follow. Such a power all of us are conscious not only of possessing, but of having actually exercised; and as long as we continue to exercise it, we are masters of our actions; but if we continue to contemplate the pleasure, and banish out of our minds the law of duty, we fully admit that the attempt to gratify the evil impulse is the inevitable result.

How
temptation
gets the
better of a
man.

How we
overcome it.

The believers in free agency therefore fully concede that the repeated gratification of an evil passion gradually destroys the moral sense, and with it the power of resisting temptation. Of this

The moral
sense and
power of
resistance
destroyed by
the repeated
gratification
of evil
passion.

The responsibility of the self-incapacitated accrued at an earlier stage.

the habitual drunkard is a striking example. Such a character may be said in a certain sense to have ceased to be a free agent, and yet he is justly held to be responsible. His responsibility, however, accrued at an earlier stage, when, contrary to the dictates of his conscience and moral sense, he yielded to his evil impulses, and thereby destroyed his power of self-control. In such a case all that is necessary for the believer in human freedom to contend for is, that it was once in his power to refuse to gratify his evil appetites; and that if a man has formed a habit which has become irresistible, he is responsible for all the consequences which it was in his power to have foreseen. In this case, therefore, our position is that man possesses such an amount of freedom, that he is the master of his actions, until by his own act he has destroyed his power of self-control. What, therefore, we affirm is, not that a man can act without a motive, but that he can choose between one motive and another, by concentrating his attention on one, and withdrawing it from the other, and that he can do this until by his own voluntary act he has destroyed his power of self-determination.

A free agent cannot modify his character at pleasure.

4. Nor is the assertion that man is a free agent equivalent to the affirmation that it is in his power to modify his character at his pleasure. Believers in human freedom recognize the following facts, which, modify responsibility, but do not destroy it.

(1.) That the conditions under which we are born, are wholly determined for us by a higher power ; and consequently, *so far as our characters are determined by them*, our responsibility is modified.

Facts which modify responsibility.
Conditions of birth.

(2.) That we are born with certain inherited appetences and tendencies which are entirely independent of our choice ; and consequently, *so far as our actions are the inevitable results of these*, we are irresponsible.

Inherited appetences and tendencies.

(3.) That it is a matter of unquestionable fact that men not only greatly vary in intellectual power, but also in that fundamental groundwork on which their moral characters are subsequently erected, some being from their earliest childhood more inclined to good, and some to particular vices than others ; consequently, *so far as our actions are directly influenced by these variations*, it modifies our responsibility as individuals.

Variations of moral character.

(4.) That habits formed by ancestors are in some mysterious way transmissible to their descendants, not as formed habits, but as tendencies to particular classes of actions, which tendencies act in a manner somewhat analogous to instincts. This transmission, however, is very far from being invariable ; and in the present state of our knowledge, we are entirely ignorant of the law in conformity with which it acts. The fact, however, is undoubted, that habits formed by parents, not unfrequently appear as tendencies to particular classes of action

Transmitted habits.

in their children ; and *when this is so, in as far as they are quite independent of their choice*, it modifies responsibility.

The moral atmosphere in which a man has been born and educated exerts an influence on his character.

(5.) A very important influence is exerted on the character of the individual by the moral atmosphere in which he has been born and educated. This fact frequently makes the precise degree of responsibility which attaches to a particular person a very complicated question. External circumstances also of various kinds, such as climate, exert a certain amount of influence on the formation of character. These, therefore, *as far as they are independent of our choice*, modify our responsibility.

Habits of evil.

(6.) The action of completely formed habits is almost instinctive; and it is an unquestionable fact that habits of evil, when fully formed, paralyze the will. In this case, therefore, although it is impossible for human laws to recognize such qualifications of responsibility (which can be only justly estimated by the all-seeing eye), the degree of responsibility for a particular act on the part of the individual, *is only in the degree in which he has contributed to the formation of the habit* by habitually yielding to temptations which it was once in his power to resist.

Illustrations.

A few illustrations will set the above positions in a clear light.

Variations of intellectual capacity.

It is unquestionable that men vary greatly in intellectual capacity, and that over these variations they exert no control. But our intellectual and

moral being constitute a unity ; and the imperfections of our intellects affect our moral judgments, and the actions which are consequent on them. To take an extreme case, insanity. There it is universally allowed that an intellectual defect renders the subject of it irresponsible. Consequently, minor degrees of this imperfection must modify our responsibility in a corresponding ratio. Such imperfections, being independent of our wills, are not our sins, but our misfortunes.

Insanity renders its victim irresponsible.

Again, with respect to children. No one who has made them the subject of careful observation, can doubt that they are born with fundamental differences of disposition. Thus their tempers greatly vary even in early infancy. To some it is natural to speak the truth, others display an inherent tendency to falsehood. The same remark is true with respect to a large number of other moral characteristics. Such tendencies manifest themselves long before that stage of mental development is attained which is necessary for constituting a man a responsible moral agent. These facts we are bound to recognize, and also the further fact that we have had no share in implanting these tendencies in ourselves. Consequently, as far as they have affected the formation of our characters, we are irresponsible for the influences which they exert. Yet while they modify, they do not destroy responsibility ; for every one of us is conscious that when our rational

Differences of disposition in children.

Their early manifestation.

They modify but do not destroy responsibility.

faculties have attained to their full development, we possess the power of modifying, and even of controlling our primary impulses, by means of the principle of habituation, a power which has been exercised in numerous cases.

The power of modifying character is the exclusive prerogative of man.

This power of modifying and of gradually altering character is the exclusive prerogative of man, and constitutes one of the great distinctions between responsible and irresponsible living agents. Animals cannot help acting on their impulses; and are incapable by their own inherent powers of modifying their instincts. I say, *by their own inherent powers*, for whatever modifications they are capable of, are acquired by a controlling power which is exerted over them by man, and not by a power which is inherent in themselves. Thus all observation proves that an animal unaided by man is incapable of self-improvement, of modifying a natural tendency, or exerting a control over its actions. But such a power we are all conscious of possessing; and many of us, of having actually exerted. Man therefore possesses a power, within certain limits, of modifying his character and of regulating his actions. So far then as he exerts, or neglects to exert this power, he is responsible, both for his character and his conduct; but for his primary instincts, and for his character and actions, *as far as they are the necessary result of these primary instincts*, he can possess no responsibility.

Animals unaided by man are incapable of self-improvement.

Man is responsible for exerting his power of self-improvement, but not for his primary instincts and their necessary results.

The effect which external circumstances, and the moral atmosphere in which men are born and educated, exert on our free agency, requires a few additional observations. It is an undoubted fact that a particular type of character is impressed on different races of men, the outlines of which are transmitted from generation to generation; of this the Negro race in Africa, the Bengalee in Asia, and the Gallic in Europe, are striking examples. Yet even this is by no means uniform, but varies within certain limits. It is no less true with respect to the masses of mankind, that in the moral atmosphere in which they have been born and educated, they for the most part live and die. But this, though for the most part true, is by no means invariably so. Numerous instances unquestionably have occurred, of men who have elevated themselves above, or who have sunk below, the condition of their birth and their environment. This proves that the results above referred to are not brought about by the action of a necessary law; for, if this were so, they would not happen for the most part, but invariably, like the results of the law of gravitation. Similarly, it has been urged, that it can be proved by statistics, that man is the creature of his surroundings; and that what we designate our wills, exert no power in determining our actions. Thus, for example, it is affirmed that the number of suicides which take

Race types
of character.

Variations.

The masses
of men live
and die in
the moral
atmosphere
in which they
have been
born and
educated.

Numerous
exceptions
prove that
this is not
the result of
the action of
a necessary
law.

The
argument
against free
agency from
statistics.

place in a particular country, varies with the population, and presents the same results year by year; that the same is true with respect to crimes generally; and that even the number of marriages, —a matter, in which it is alleged that will ought to exert great power—varies with the price of the necessaries of life. Hence the inference has been drawn, that our belief in free agency is a delusion.

The inference from statistics assumes the point at issue.

Free will not capricious.

Yearly statistics not identical as they would be if necessary law were dominant in human life.

This inference assumes the point at issue. The statistics in question present us with the combined result of our impulses, our wills, and of the influences which are exerted over us by external circumstances. The argument owes all its plausibility to the most incorrect assumption that the believers in free agency affirm that the will acts at hap-hazard, or by caprice. But further: the inference itself is an incorrect deduction from the facts, for although the numbers in question closely approximate to each other from year to year, they are by no means identical, which they ought to be, if necessary law was the dominant power in human life. The above arguments therefore wholly fail to prove that man is not free to act, or to forbear acting, within certain definite limits; and no rational believer in human freedom wishes to affirm that our power of self-determination is devoid of limitations.¹

¹ I am here referring to the positions which have been set forth by Mr. Buckle and other similar writers.

Such are the facts of our moral nature as they bear on the doctrine of free agency. It has been necessary to set them thus definitely before the reader, because the reasonings of necessitarians owe no small portion of their plausibility to the mis-statements of the views of their opponents. The facts, as above explained we admit, but the inferences which have been deduced from them we deny. Our position is, that while they modify responsibility, and render it difficult, even impossible, for man to determine its precise amount in numerous individual cases, they by no means destroy it. We freely concede that man is not able to do everything which he pleases—there are limits to his freedom, and circumstances in the formation of his character, over which he can exert no control, which modify his responsibility; but he has a sufficient amount of freedom within these limits to constitute him a free responsible agent.

Admitted facts modify but do not destroy responsibility.

Man has sufficient freedom to constitute him a free agent.

Having thus defined the positions which are taken by the believers in the free agency of man, it will be necessary to set before the reader those of philosophical necessitarians whose theories we are controverting.

Their position admits of being very briefly stated. According to them, everything in man is the result of the conjoint action of matter and force, and he is necessarily that which his bodily organization makes him, and nothing more. They

The position of philosophical necessitarians of the present day.

This philosophy rests on *a priori* reasonings and assumptions.

contend, therefore, that as matter and force are necessary agents, man being their product, must be a necessary agent. Otherwise it would be possible for an agent to evolve out of itself what was never in itself, a position which we readily admit is intrinsically absurd, for it is obvious that necessary and free agency cannot co-exist in the same subject. This philosophy, therefore, let it be observed, rests not on facts, but on assumptions and *a priori* reasonings; and on the strength of these, it calls on us to reject the clearest intuitions of our consciousness. We, on the contrary, contend that it contradicts the great facts of human nature, and the universal experience of mankind. Let us, therefore, consider the grounds on which the overwhelming majority of the human race have in all ages believed, and still continue to believe, themselves to be free, and not necessary agents.

Free agency the direct affirmation of our consciousness.

Analysis of our mental acts before engaging in action.

1. Our free agency is a direct affirmation of our consciousness, *i.e.*, we know that we are free agents; in other words, we are certain that when an impulse to a particular course of action presents itself, it is in our power to enter on it, or to forbear. A brief analysis of our various mental acts, prior to our engaging in action, will establish this beyond a doubt. What then is the line of conduct which we pursue? When an impulse to engage in a course of action presents itself, before we engage in it, we

deliberate on its desirability. If different impulses present themselves, our reason sits in judgment on their various suggestions, and pronounces in favour of one and against others, according to its sense of fitness. This act of judgment is followed by an act of volition, in which we determine to adopt the course of action to which our reason has assented. Then it is, but not till then, that we set in motion the secret springs of our activity, and attempt to carry the action thus determined on into execution. Of all these processes our consciousness is direct; and each, and every one of them, we can verify for ourselves by a careful observation of our own minds. Every step in them, therefore, proves that we are free, and not necessary agents, for the idea that a necessary agent can either deliberate or choose is an absurdity. Further: a necessary agent is incapable of being tempted to break the law of its being, on it temptations will not act; but although the moral law is the law of man's being, and that which his conscience tells him that he ought to obey, he is capable of breaking it. Such a power is only consistent with his being a free, and not a necessary agent.

Judgment of
our reason.

An act of
volition
follows

We are
conscious of
these
processes.

They prove
our freedom.

A necessary
agent cannot
break the
law of its
being.

In opposition to this direct testimony of consciousness, and as a set-off against it, necessitarians affirm that our various motives admit of being reduced to a common measure, viz., the pleasure which their gratification gives, or the desire of each

The neces-
sitarian
contention.

The power of motives in proportion to the pleasure anticipated from their gratification, according to necessitarians.

individual to realize his own greatest happiness; that motives do not differ in kind, but only in degree; and that their power to impel us to action is in exact proportion to our sense of the ultimate amount of pleasure which we think will result from their gratification. Hence the inference is drawn, that man cannot help acting on the strongest motive, *i.e.*, adopting that course of action which seems to promise him the greatest amount of pleasure; for, in the language of this philosophy, pleasure and happiness are identical. This being so, it is urged that we deceive ourselves in imagining that we exercise any real choice in determining the course of our actions; but, on the contrary, they are determined for us by the necessity of acting on the strongest motive, with the generation of which we have had nothing to do.

This philosophy allows that we have the power of choosing some distant good.

To this I reply, that even if we admit, for the sake of argument, that all motives can be measured by the common measure above referred to, still this philosophy allows that we possess the power of choosing some distant good, instead of giving way to an impulse which urges us to a great and immediate gratification. This alone is sufficient to prove that we possess a power which is capable of controlling our impulses and of choosing between our motives, and that we are under no necessity of yielding to the strongest. I say the strongest, because it is an unquestionable fact in human

nature that the impulses which prompt us to immediate indulgence are far more powerful factors to excite us to action than the contemplation of some distant good. Consequently, if the former are to yield to the latter, this can only be effected by the exertion of a powerful act of self-control. It follows, therefore, that the possession of this power, of which we all are conscious, proves that within certain limits we are free agents, because without freedom an act of self-control would be impossible, for the two stand to each other in as close a correlation as the concave and convex of a circle.

The possession of this power proves that we are free agents.

But we deny the truth of the position that our motives can be measured by the common principle above referred to, and that their power to produce action is in exact proportion to their intensity. On the contrary, we maintain that motives differ in kind as well as in degree, and that it is in our power to follow the suggestions of a higher motive of less, and to restrain a lower one, of greater intensity. What, I ask, does the position against which I am contending, invite us to believe? This and no other, viz., that the impulse which urges the drunkard to his bottle, and that which urges the martyr, out of regard to that he considers truth and duty, to yield himself to a torturing death when he could escape by an act of apostacy can be measured by the common measure of self-gratifica-

Motives differ in kind as well as degree.

The drunkard and the martyr cannot be measured by the common measure of self-gratification.

tion; and that martyrdom is only one of the forms of self-love,—for this is what the pursuit of the greatest happiness really means. Such a position the common sense of mankind will pronounce to be incredible.

Objection
answered.

It has been urged, however, that the martyr expects to be remunerated hereafter for his sufferings here, and [consequently that after all he is only pursuing his own greatest happiness. But there have been self-sacrificers in the cause of what they believed to be truth and duty, who could see no prospect of reward in this life, and who had no *certain conviction* of the reality of one to come. Such was Socrates, who although he entertained a strong hope that he should survive the stroke of death, yet admitted that he was devoid of a full assurance that he would. The same is true of not a few who have had no belief in a future state. Does it, I ask, enter into the calculation of any one who leaps into the water at the hazard of his life to save a man from drowning, that he is realizing his greatest happiness by the act either in this world or in the next? He may think it noble to do so: he may think it his duty; something within him says, You ought to attempt to save that life at the hazard of your own; but a reference to his own greatest happiness never enters into his thoughts. If it did, instead of impelling him, it would deter him from the act.

Socrates had
no certain
anticipation
of future
reward.

The thought
of happiness
does not
enter into
the mind of
the man who
saves
another's
life at the
risk of his
own.

All human activity, it is true, originates in a desire to gratify some impulse of our nature; but it by no means follows that that impulse is a desire which terminates in self. If it did, self-sacrificers would be few.

2. Our consciousness is direct that we possess a power of originating action, and that we do originate action whenever we exert an act of will, or volition. It consists of two factors, the consciousness of an "I" or "Ego," as an existing entity, and that this "I" possesses the power of self-determination. But our consciousness of the I, or Ego, from which a sense of voluntary agency is indispensable, involves the belief in the existence of something which is not self, whereas over that which is non-self, our consciousness tells us that we can exert no direct control. Further: we possess a direct consciousness of *willing* to act, and that on doing so, action follows; and of *willing* not to act, and the springs of our activity stand motionless. Inasmuch, therefore, as no certainties can be greater than these different presentations of consciousness, it follows by inevitable necessity that they prove that man is a free, and not a necessary, agent.

We are conscious of the power of originating action.

We are conscious of willing to act or not to act.

But it has been objected that consciousness may be, and frequently is, mistaken, and therefore that its presentations are no certain guide to truth. To this objection I reply by putting to those who urge

It is objected that consciousness may be mistaken.

All
reasoned
truth rests
on some
affirmation
of our
conscious-
ness.

The denial
of the
validity of
truths which
do not admit
of proof
reduces all
human
knowledge
to a mass of
shapeless
ruins.

it the question, If the presentations of consciousness are no guides to truth, what better guides do we possess? For it is an indisputable fact that all reasoned truth, whether it be inductive or deductive, rests for its ultimate validity on some affirmation of our consciousness. This is true alike of the axioms of mathematics and of the information which is furnished by our senses. To the latter, consciousness is the sole witness; and with respect to the former, all truths which admit of proof must be deduced from higher truths which do not admit of proof, the truth of which is given in an act of consciousness, in which we see the truth of the affirmation in the clear light of intellectual vision; and which, owing to the fundamental constitution of our minds, we are incapable of believing to be otherwise than true. The denial of the validity of such truths therefore reduces the whole body of human knowledge to a mass of shapeless ruins, and renders it impossible to affirm of a single proposition that it is true or false; for even the affirmation that all human knowledge is invalid must involve the assumption of some proposition, the truth of which has no other foundation than the validity of some presentation of our consciousness. Of the truth of these, we are even more certain than we are of the existence of an external world, because our consciousness of the former is direct, whereas our belief in the existence of the latter is

an inference from the former. Further, as all knowledge which we derive from our senses depends on the validity of their presentations, and these can only be verified in an act of consciousness, it follows, if the primary affirmations of consciousness above referred to are not trustworthy, that all our knowledge of the external world must be equally untrustworthy. I need hardly say that such an affirmation saps the foundation on which not only the whole of physical science, but the whole course of human life is built, and is therefore incredible. We affirm, therefore, that the belief in our free agency rests on precisely the same foundation as that of our highest certainties; and if the belief in question is a delusion, all our other certainties must also be equally delusions.

From these considerations the following all-important conclusion follows. All reasonings which lead to conclusions which contradict the primary affirmations of our consciousness must be the result either of incorrect assumptions, or of some error in the intellectual processes by which they have been deduced. Consequently, all those processes of reasoning by which necessitarians endeavour to prove that man is not a free agent must be faulty somewhere; because they lead to conclusions which contradict the greatest of our certainties, viz., the direct affirmations of our consciousness. When, therefore, any one endeavours

If the primary affirmations of consciousness are untrustworthy, all our knowledge of the external world must be equally untrustworthy.

Belief in our free agency rests on the same foundation as our highest certainties.

Conclusion.

to prove that our belief that we are free agents is a delusion, ordinary men may with confidence reply to the necessitarian philosopher, We are inadequate judges of your abstract and complicated reasonings; but of one thing we are certain, viz., that your conclusions must be false, because they contradict the clearest affirmations of our consciousness, of the truth of which we are as certain as we are of our own existence, and far more certain than we are of yours. Such an answer will both approve itself to common sense, and stand the test of a sound philosophy.

The validity
of the
testimony of
conscious-
ness.

Let us now examine the validity of the objection above referred to, that our consciousness of an object does not prove its real existence. What then are the facts? for it is with facts and not with abstractions that we have to deal. I fully admit that our consciousness of an object does not necessarily prove that it has an existence external to the mind. It is an unquestionable fact that in numerous cases of mental disease, the mind is capable of presenting to itself images to which there is no external reality corresponding. But when reasoning on such a subject, the appeal lies, not to what the mind does when diseased, but to its action when sound. If it be asked, What is the criterion of mental soundness, I answer, the concurrent testimony of considerable numbers of men. When numbers thus concur in affirming

The appeal
lies to the
sound mind

that they perceive a particular object, we may safely conclude that it is no figment of the imagination. But if it be urged that instances have occurred where large numbers of enthusiasts have been the prey of delusions of this description, then the appeal lies to a still wider testimony, and finally to that of ninety-nine hundredths of mankind. When this concurs, the conclusion must be accepted as final.

The conclusion that must be regarded as final.

But the subject which we are now considering is independent of the question, whether the testimony of consciousness proves the existence of external realities corresponding to its presentations. In the present case we have only to do with internal facts; and respecting these its affirmations are necessarily valid. This is true even of the madman and the enthusiast, their mental eye really perceives the objects which they believe that they see. Their consciousness is not at fault; but their error consists in assigning to its presentations, an existence external to their minds. But in the case which we are considering, the testimony of our consciousness to our free agency has nothing to do with the existence of any thing external to ourselves; but it is strictly limited to testifying to the truth of an internal fact, that internal fact being the truth of its own perceptions. In a word, it testifies to what it sees, perceives, and feels. To all this, its testimony cannot but be valid. We

We have to do with internal facts.

The testimony of consciousness to our free agency has nothing to do with anything external to ourselves.

feel that we are free either to act or to forbear acting. Consciousness here testifies to a fact of the existence of which it is the one competent judge. The possession of such a power constitutes us responsible agents.

The structure of language bears witness to free agency.

Next, let us consider the testimony which the structure of language gives to the great truth of man's free agency. Whatever may have been the original mode of communication among our primitive ancestors, it is an admitted fact among philologists that all existing languages, with the exception of a few root words, have been gradually elaborated by the human mind; and that in the course of this elaboration they have passed through various stages of development, of which their present forms are the result, and furnish us with the history. Language therefore constitutes a register of the universal experience of mankind. As such, it testifies to an all-important fact in this controversy, that those who have invented and developed its existing forms (the process was an unconscious one) have been unanimous in believing themselves to be free agents. So strongly has this belief impressed itself on its structure that the necessitarian, when he is engaged in arguing against free agency, is compelled to express himself in terms which take for granted the truth of the very thing which he is attempting to dispute; so completely has the belief in free agency held possession of man's entire

The necessitarian is compelled to express himself in terms which assume what he disputes in arguing against free agency.

sphere of thought. If necessitarianism is true, it will be necessary to reconstruct the forms of language, to bring them into harmony with its principles. A few examples of this its testimony will suffice as illustrations.

The conception involved in the pronoun "I" assumes the existence of ourselves as conscious self-determining agents. It is impossible to use it in conjunction with any active verb without assuming this. What, I ask, do we mean, when we use such expressions as "I do this, or that," or "I will do this, or that," or "I will forbear to do this, or that"? It is evident that when we thus speak, we conceive of ourselves as being self-determining agents, and the voluntary causes of actions. Again, when we use the pronoun "my" we conceive of that being which we designate "self"¹ as the possessor of other things, which although most closely connected with ourselves, are yet distinct from ourselves. Thus we speak of our hands, our feet, our bodies, and our understandings. What, I ask,

The pronoun "I" assumes our existence as self-determining agents.

The pronoun "my" assumes that we are possessors of things distinct from ourselves.

¹ I do not here undertake to define the metaphysical elements of self, or to determine how far these and various other things may constitute elements in self. All that I wish to observe is, that our ordinary consciousness affirms the existence of a substratum, in which those things exist, of which that consciousness is capable of predicating "My." This consciousness therefore affirms that something exists which we call "ourselves," which is distinct from that which we predicate "my," or in other words, that the self which possesses and the thing possessed cannot be identical.

Mr. Mill
and Mr.
Spencer use
language in-
volving a
direct con-
tradiction of
their own
positions.

do such expressions mean? Obviously, that we view the "I," or Ego, as the possessor of these things, and as the groundwork in which they subsist. Even writers who, like Mr. Mill and Mr. Spencer, deny the existence of free agency (for such a denial is involved in the denial of the existence of self as distinct from our ever varying acts of consciousness), are obliged to use language which involves an assumption which is directly contradictory to their own positions. Thus they affirm that what we are conscious of as ourselves, is nothing more than the sum total of our consciousness at any particular moment. But inasmuch as these consciousnesses are in a state of perpetual change, it follows, if ourselves and our different states of consciousness are identical, that that which we designate ourselves, can have no permanent existence. Yet they habitually speak of themselves as conscious of the past and as originators of action just like other men do. But further, it may be justly asked, How is it possible that the "I," or Ego, can be conscious of this or that, if the I is nothing but the consciousness itself; and that, too, a consciousness in a condition of perpetual flux; and which has no existence independent of it. Such writers, to be consistent, ought to substitute in their writings for the pronoun "I," the following complicated and cumbrous paraphrase, "The sum total of the consciousnesses at any particular moment, to

What they
ought to
substitute
for the pro-
noun "I."

which the name of the writer is attached, does, thinks, feels, or possesses this or that." Common sense will have no difficulty in perceiving, if such a substitution were made, for example, in the writings of Mr. Spencer, consisting as they do of between four and five thousand pages, containing a large number of very complicated scientific terms very difficult to realize in definite thought, that it would have the effect of making a philosophy, already sufficiently cumbrous, a hundred times more cumbrous still. Nay more, if his language were in all other respects to be corrected, so as to make it an adequate expression of his dogmas, it would make his writings unintelligible to all, except those who are already imbued with his principles, if even it would convey any definite meaning to them.

The effect of
such a
substitution.

The previous considerations therefore render it certain that the fundamental groundwork of language is based on the assumption that the I or Ego is a self-determining agent, capable of volition and originating action. The contrary supposition involves the assumption that we are not agents, but things; not originators of action, but only capable of being acted on. If this is true philosophy, it is false to say, I did this, or that, the real fact being that something else did it; for, according to the theory I am combating, the I has no existence other than the ever-changing acts of consciousness, and is never active, but is

The ground-
work of
language
based on the
assumption
that the
Ego can will
and
originate
action.

always passive. This being so, it will be necessary, if the language of the future is to be an accurate expression of the realities of things, that it should discontinue the use of every term which implies that man is a voluntary cause of action, and substitute the passive for the active verb, besides making other most important reforms in the structure of language.

Another set of terms which testify to the universal belief of mankind in free agency.

Further: there is another set of terms, such as I will, I can, I might, I could, I would, and I ought, which testify to the universal belief of mankind in their being free agents, and to their possession of a power of self-determination. So deeply are these terms incorporated into the structure of language, that it is impossible to write a paragraph of any length without using one or more of them. What then do they tell us respecting the opinions of those by whom language has been evolved? Obviously that they were believers in their own free agency; for every one of these terms assumes it, yet on the principles of the necessitarian philosophy they are devoid of meaning. Take, for example, the expression, I will. We not only use it in reference to the future, but to denote purpose and deliberate intention, *i.e.*, that it is our pleasure and firm determination to do some particular act. All such expressions would be meaningless, nay, misleading, if we were impelled to action by a power over

We use the expression "I will" to denote purpose and firm determination.

which we could exert no control. Moreover, a determined act of volition is capable of exerting such a power that it can overbear the strongest of our natural impulses. To enable a man to rule his fellows a strong will is indispensable. Similar observations are applicable to the other terms. Every one of them implies the consciousness of a power to act or to forbear acting. If, then, the necessitarian philosophy is a true account of the actualities of things, all men in all ages must have been the prey of one of the greatest and most incredible of delusions.

If necessitarianism is true, men in all ages must have been the prey of incredible delusion.

But the term, I ought, is so intimately connected with our conscience and moral nature, that it requires a separate consideration, owing to the fact that this controversy has been thrown into the utmost confusion by being mixed up with a variety of theories which have been propounded respecting the mode of their origination. Once more, therefore, I must ask the reader to observe, that in this discussion we have nothing to do with the question how these faculties may have originated. We are concerned only with what our consciousness testifies to existing facts, which will still be facts, whatever may have been the origin of our moral nature, even if it could be proved (which it certainly has not), that the original progenitor of man was some brutal ancestor. Further: our opponents are in the constant habit of ap-

The term "I ought."

We have nothing to do with the origin of our faculties in this discussion.

The appeal
is made to
to civilized
man.

pealing to man in a savage state ; and they urge that savage man is devoid of such a conception as "I ought," and possesses no trace of a conscience. Many of the assertions which have been made on this subject have now been proved to be inaccurate ; but in this discussion let it be observed that the appeal lies, not to imperfect man, but to man in the full condition of his development as man, *i.e.*, to civilized man. Whatever, then, may be the condition of savages with respect to the conception of duty or oughtness, it is an indisputable fact that it is one which is possessed by all men who are in a state of civilization, account for its origin as we may. The only question, therefore, which concerns us in this controversy is, what do the conscience and moral sense of civilized man testify to existing fact ? This is the real point at issue, and we must not allow our attention to be diverted from it.

The
meaning of
the term "I
ought."

What, then, do we mean when we say, "I ought ?" We affirm that it is right to act in this or that particular manner ; and that it is wrong not to do so. We are, in fact, presented with an alternative, a right and a wrong course of action. When, therefore, conscience says, "You ought," it decides in favour of one of these alternatives, and for the rejection of the other. But the being which is capable of choosing between two alternatives must be a free agent. Further : the con-

ception "I ought," involves the contemplation of an ideal, which the Ego seeks to realize, and feels that it is bound to attempt to realize, but which it has the power of forbearing to do. The conception of "oughtness" therefore announces a law which we feel to be binding on ourselves, and creates in us a sense of demerit if we fail to comply with its demands. Further: when conscience announces this law, it makes no reference to the opinions of others, but sternly affirms, You ought so to do, though the whole world is against you. It utters its commands irrespective of all consequences, and even if the thought occurs, "This is a hard saying; who can hear it?" it refuses to relax the command, and visits the transgressor with a feeling of dissatisfaction. It simply says, You owe it to do this; and whatever hope may be suggested by reason as a consequence of obedience, it does not even make the command less stern by adding the promise, "This do, and thou shalt live." Every step in this process therefore proves that we are free, and not necessary agents.

The conception announces a binding law.

Conscience utters its commands irrespective of consequences.

Next, let us analyse what is given in the kindred affirmation of conscience when it utters the command, It is your duty to do, or to forbear doing, this or that. Observe: it does not say, "It is expedient so to do," or that it is pleasant, or that it will promote your highest happiness, or that obedience will not involve a painful act of

The significance of duty.

We do not
owe duty to
ourselves.

Obligation
must centre
in a Being
who is
external to
ourselves,
who, like
ourselves,
must be a
free agent.

self-sacrifice ; but irrespective of all such considerations, and despite of all consequences, it says, "It is your duty," *i.e.*, you owe it to do this, or that. To whom then do we owe it ? Not to ourselves ; for to owe a duty to ourselves is no real indebtedness, but a figure of speech. To owe a thing to ourselves bears a close resemblance to taking money from one pocket and putting it into another. The obligation, therefore, must centre in a Being who is external to ourselves. But we can owe nothing to a stock, a stone, or any kind of necessary agent ; nor can a necessary agent owe anything to us. It follows, therefore, that both ourselves who owe, and the Being to whom we owe, must be possessed of a moral nature, *i.e.*, that both must be free agents. The idea of duty, therefore, advances a step beyond that of oughtness, and proclaims the existence of a God, who is not a mere force, but a moral being to whom man is ultimately responsible.

Conclusion.

Our conclusion therefore is, the idea of duty involves that of obligation ; the idea of obligation, responsibility ; the idea of responsibility, a power of self-determination ; and a power of self-determination, a freedom within certain limits to act or to forbear acting ; for without this freedom obligation, responsibility, and a power of self-determination are inconceivable.

The
testimony of
legislation.

Equally decisive is the testimony given by the whole course of legislation to the universality of

the belief that man is a free agent. All just legislation is based on the assumption of this truth. It looks not merely to the external act, but to the motive of the agent. Did the agent intend to do the act, or was it a mere accident over which he could exert no control? Thus the same result produced with intention may be the foulest of crimes; but if without intention, it is no crime, but a misadventure. Let us take an example: a man is found dead with a fractured skull. If the wound was inflicted with intention, and if the person who inflicted it knew what he was doing, the law pronounces the act murder; but if without intention or knowledge, it is an accident. The same principle is also universally acted on in private life. All men naturally raise a cry of injustice for punishing a man for what he could not help doing, or for what he did in ignorance or without intention; and however injurious the act may be to us personally, as soon as we are convinced that it was unintentional, our anger (which is really a desire to punish a wrong-doer for the wrong which he has inflicted) ceases. So likewise is it with respect to an act of one deranged. We put him under restraint for the purpose of preventing him from doing further mischief, but to punish him would be an outrage. In like manner we act with respect to animals. They are governed simply by impulse, and are incapable of rational

All just legislation is based on the assumption of man's free agency.

Illustration.

The principle acted on in private life.

We do not punish the deranged for their acts.

No one
punishes a
noxious
animal.

A noxious
man is held
responsible.

Free agency
or the
absence of it
constitutes
the differ-
ence.

The
testimony of
the past
experience
of civilized
man sum-
marised.

choice. We therefore refuse to hold them responsible, however mischievous they may be. A noxious animal we kill to save ourselves and others from future danger, but no one thinks of punishing it as a responsible agent. But a noxious man we hold responsible; as such, we attach to him blame, and deem him justly deserving of punishment. What, I ask, is the reason of the different point of view with which we contemplate the same outward result, according as we view it as brought about with, or without, intention? The only possible answer is, the possession or the non-possession of free agency: for intention involves freedom to act or to forbear acting; and without it, it is destitute of meaning.

The testimony of the past experience of civilized man to our free agency may be briefly summarised thus: No freedom, no responsibility; no responsibility, no obligation; no obligation, no sense of duty; no sense of duty, no morality; no morality, no distinction between right and wrong. If one link on this chain fails, all sense of obligation ceases: the idea involved in the conception "I ought" is a delusion; duty is nothing but the necessity of yielding obedience to the strongest, *i.e.*, one whose sole claim to command is the power to punish us for disobedience, and human society becomes a mass of hopeless confusion.

Such are the facts to which the consciousness

and the conscience of civilized man have testified in every age. What, I ask, have necessitarians to set against them? I answer, not a single fact, but a number of theories respecting the origin of the facts, of *a priori* assumptions, which are incapable of verification, and of deductive reasonings founded upon them. But what is the value of such reasonings and assumptions when they come into collision with the primary facts of consciousness? We answer, in the words of a well-known phrase, "So much the worse for the theories and the assumptions." But if we are to accept the positions of necessitarians, civilized man, throughout all the ages of his existence, has been feeding on a delusion; and the fundamental groundwork of his thoughts, and the laws which have regulated his conduct, have been based upon a falsehood. Is this, I ask, credible? What, then, is the course which reason suggests when theories and reasonings such as those above referred to lead to conclusions which contradict the primary intuitions of our consciousness? Surely it is not to doubt the validity of our intuitions, but to question the truth of the assumptions, and the validity of the reasonings. Let us apply this principle to some of the most important of the theories and the reasonings of necessitarians.

Necessitarians have only *a priori* assumptions to set against the facts.

The course suggested by reason in the circumstances.

Necessitarian theories and reasonings.

The chief ground on which they affirm that our consciousness of free agency is a delusion is the

The chief
assumption
of the
necessi-
tarians.

The
inference
drawn.

assumption that nothing exists in the universe but matter and force ; and that these, by their combined action, have evolved¹ every thing which exists, including man and his moral nature. From this the inference is drawn that man must be a necessary agent, because matter and force are necessary agents ; and it is impossible that a thing can evolve out of itself, what was never in itself. The truth of this last position we fully admit ; but as the highest certitudes of consciousness affirm that we are free agents—certitudes than which we have

¹ The term “evolution” as it is ordinarily used both in scientific and popular language, involves a very serious ambiguity. Its real meaning is “a rolling out from.” Consequently, it is only possible to evolve out of a thing, some thing or quality which was originally in it, either in an active or passive state. Accretions, therefore, to a thing, are incorrectly spoken of as evolutions from that thing. But all growth, whether of vegetables or animals, involves an accretion to the original seed, *i.e.*, an introduction into it of something foreign to its nature, which it possesses the power of incorporating into its own substance. Such processes, therefore, are incorrectly designated evolutions. Thus scientific men are in the habit of speaking of one thing being produced out of another by a process which they designate evolution. Thus nothing is more common than the affirmation that man has been evolved out of some lower animal ; and that by a process of this kind everything which has life has been produced during the indefinite ages of the past. But in cases like this, where extreme accuracy of thought is necessary, the expression is misleading ; for even on the principles of the purest materialism, the original germs of life cannot by any possibility have evolved out of themselves all the forms of living things, which have existed in the past, or which exist in the present, except by the aid of a principle wholly different from evolution, *viz.*, that of accretion and assimilation.

no greater certainty—it follows that the theory that man is nothing but the outcome of matter and force must be false. Or to put the same truth in a positive form, man must be the production of a force which is intelligent and free, *i.e.*, a Being must exist, who is distinct from the material universe, who is the author of the intellectual and moral nature of man.

The theory that man is nothing but the outcome of matter and force is false.

The above reply is equally applicable to the reasonings of the Agnostic, who, although not a theoretical, is a moral atheist, *i.e.*, while he admits that the belief in the existence of a first cause of the universe is a necessity of thought, he empties this concession of the smallest moral value by proclaiming that it is impossible to affirm anything respecting the real nature of this cause; that our knowledge is strictly limited to matter, its laws, and necessary forces, and that every thing in man is the outcome of their conjoint action.

The moral atheism of the Agnostic is met by the same reasoning.

Another theory has been propounded in support of the same position, that our various mental phenomena are modes of motion; and inasmuch as all motion is under the dominion of necessary law, that all the phenomena of mind must be necessary also; and consequently free agency can have no real existence.

The theory that our various mental phenomena are modes of motion.

With respect to these theories (for they are theories, and nothing more), I shall only observe that our conception of matter and its phenomena,

Our conception of matter and mind and their phenomena at opposite poles of thought.

Mental functions designated intellectual separated by an impassable gulf from sensations.

and our conception of mind and its phenomena, occupy opposite poles of thought, which no ingenuity of philosophers or scientists has succeeded in bridging over. Although all sensations are the results of motions, yet it is an undoubted fact that no human being has succeeded in translating a motion into a sensation, or even in conceiving the possibility of doing so. In like manner an impassable gulf separates sensations from those mental functions which we designate intellectual; and one equally wide, separates both motions, sensations, and acts, purely intellectual, from those which we designate moral. Until the one can be translated into the other, and the gulf which separates the one class of conceptions from the other be bridged over, it will be sufficient to say with respect to the positions in question, Not proven; and we need not trouble ourselves with the plea so often urged by theorists of all kinds, whenever they find themselves in difficulties, that although science has not yet succeeded in bridging over the different gulfs to which I have alluded, it will certainly do so at some period of the future. Our concern, I repeat it, is not with prophecies, nor with tendencies, but with actual present facts. Such facts are the presentations of consciousness above referred to; and until the above positions are proved to have a more substantial basis on which to rest than hopes, conjectures, and abstract theories, it is absurd

to ask us to believe that we are living on delusions.

Further: some eminent men of science affirm that thought is a function of the brain, and nothing more. Assuming this position to be true, they urge that inasmuch as the brain is nothing but a mass of organized matter, and matter and its motions are subject to necessary laws, whatever results from their combined action, *i.e.*, all the phenomena of mind, must be equally necessary; and consequently free agency has no real existence.

The theory that thought is a function of the brain.

According to it the phenomena of mind are necessary.

But the premises do not justify the conclusion. Assuming all that physiologists affirm to have been proved, what does it amount to? This, and no more: that as we are at present constituted, the brain is the organ of thought, that every thought involves a corresponding movement in the brain; that within the limits of human experience, wherever a brain does not exist, thought is not; and wherever the brain is imperfect, thought is imperfect; and that mind can neither be made visible, weighed, or measured by the most delicate instrument which man has succeeded in inventing. All this may be conceded, yet it by no means proves that mind is a function of the brain, or that it and the brain are identical. All that it really proves is, that in the constitution of things which come under our observation, mind uses the brain as its instrument, and that mind and brain are so in-

The identity of mind and brain not proved.

timately correlated, that the mind cannot act without the brain. But it totally fails to prove that mind has no existence apart from the brain, or that under a different constitution of things it cannot act without one. Still less does it afford the smallest pretext for affirming that the innumerable adaptations with which the universe abounds, and the order which reigns throughout it, do not prove the existence of a mind which is capable of acting apart from all material limitations. This being so, it follows that there is nothing in the discoveries of physiologists respecting the nature and functions of the brain, which invalidates the testimony of consciousness to man's free agency, and his possession of a power of self-determination.

The testimony of consciousness to man's free agency not invalidated by the discoveries of physiologists respecting the nature and functions of the brain.

The last position which requires notice is the affirmation that the atoms, out of which all things have been evolved, contain in themselves the principles of life, intelligence, and freedom; or to state the same idea in the words of a well-known scientist, that matter contains in itself the potency of all things. We are therefore asked to accept as the foundation of a sound philosophy of man the astounding proposition, that a class of atoms exist which are capable of intelligence and self-determination; or else, if as units they are devoid of these powers, they are capable of producing such results when in combination, of which they were utterly destitute when out of combination, *i.e.*, all

The theory that atoms capable of intelligence and self-determination exist.

existing intelligence and morality. This theory is a theory pure and simple; without a single fact on which to rest, for not even the author of it pretends that an atom or a molecule of this kind has ever come within the range of his experience. With respect to it, the common sense of mankind will concur in thinking that atoms and molecules, which possess in themselves intelligence or freedom, or which are capable of evolving out of themselves in combination qualities of which they were utterly destitute when out of combination, must be very singular products of nature. Nay, it is impossible that they can have been such products, for, according to the theories of those against whose principles I am contending, such atoms must have been self-existent; for if they had a beginning, a Being must exist who originated them. This Being therefore, unless he was capable of imparting to them the qualities of freedom and intelligence, while he himself was bound by the iron law of necessity, must have possessed consciousness, free agency, and intelligence; and consequently must be the Author of these qualities as they exist in man. Further, as a free agent is a nobler being than a necessary agent (for to the latter we never assign praise or blame), if man is the production of a necessary agent, that necessary agent has been capable of producing a being greater and nobler than itself. But it will be unnecessary to

No atom or molecule of the kind has ever been discovered.

Such atoms must have been self-existent.

Their Creator must have possessed consciousness, free agency, and intelligence, and be the Author of these qualities in man.

discuss this theory further, for it practically concedes the point for which we are contending, viz., the existence of free agency and a power of self-determination, either in atoms, molecules, or in their results in combination.

The distinction instinctively felt between physical and moral agents proves that man is a free agent.

Once more: the distinction which all men instinctively feel between physical and moral agents, and between physical and moral laws, constitutes an overwhelming proof that man is a free, and not a necessary agent. A physical agent cannot break the law of its being: it acts as it does because it cannot help so acting; it is always trustworthy, it never yields to temptation, it never lies. Thus a piece of iron can only act in the same way, and will only act in the same way for ever under similar circumstances. Its actions, therefore, form an order of phenomena which never varies, which order we designate their law. Moral agents, on the contrary, act in conformity with a law of a wholly different character. Moral law, be it observed, is not the order of events as they actually are in the moral world, but the order of events as they ought to be. It contemplates an ideal, up to which the moral agent ought to act; and its conception involves the idea of an authority which has a right to command. At the back of physical laws there is force, and force only; at the back of moral law is not force, but authority. A physical law can be broken neither by a physical

Differences between physical and moral law.

nor a moral agent; a moral law can be broken by a moral agent. Physical agents can be neither persuaded nor tempted, nothing can divert them from their course but the action of superior force. Moral agents are precisely the reverse. Physical agents cannot impress their will on one another, for they have no will to impress. A moral agent can issue an order which another moral agent will feel it his duty to obey; but to all orders physical agents are deaf. But while no moral agent can violate the law of a physical agent, or induce it to violate its own law, it is capable by an act of its will, within certain limits, of diverting the course which a physical agent would pursue if left to itself, and making it do his pleasure. Thus for example, iron has been made man's obedient servant without once violating the law of its action. A piece of iron left to itself will not float, but man, without either violating or suspending its laws, can make it float; man cannot walk across the ocean, but he can construct an iron vessel which will carry him to the most distant lands, and make this unintelligent machine obedient to his will. Similarly, electricity can neither hear, think, nor speak; if you ask it to convey a message for you, it will be deaf to your most earnest entreaty, yet man can so impress his will upon it as to make it his most faithful servant, and influence the actions of moral agents; and although moral agents when

Differences
between
physical and
moral
agents.

Examples.

Physical
agents can
be made
the instru-
ments of
man's will.

The
influence of
will the
most potent
agency in
human
affairs.

separated from one another by thousands of miles cannot produce the smallest effect on one another, yet by using this unintelligent force as the instrument of his pleasure, a man can so affect other moral agents at this remote distance within a few minutes as may kindle a war which may last for years, and sacrifice lives by thousands. Numberless similar instances might be adduced, in which man makes physical agents the instruments of effectuating his will by diverting their forces into a direction different from that which they would pursue if they were left to themselves; nay more, he can even make them the agents of his will and the memorials of his existence long after he has passed from this earthly scene, and even the instruments of handing down to future generations the image of himself: what he thought, and what he did. So far, therefore, is it from being true that the influence of will is inappreciable, as necessitarians affirm, it is not only the most potent of all human agencies in the affairs of man, but it is capable of producing wholly different results in nature from those which its forces would have effected if they had been allowed to pursue their own course unmodified by man. In a word, moral agents have transformed the appearance of the globe, and have made it wholly different from what it would have been if its various physical agents had been left to pursue the course of their own undirected action.

What then do these and innumerable similar facts prove? I answer that man is a free, and not a necessary agent; that he is a self-determining cause of action, and not a machine which only differs from ordinary machines in that he is a machine possessed of life.

The facts prove that man is a self-determining cause of action.

The belief in necessitarianism therefore is founded on theories, assumptions, and abstract reasoning, *versus* facts; the belief in free agency is founded on facts, *versus* theories, assumptions, and abstract reasonings. Necessitarianism is the belief of the speculator only as long as he continues in his study; but the moment he enters the active world, he feels himself compelled to think, talk, and act on the assumption that he is a free agent, and the doctrine that man is a machine is felt to be a practical falsehood. It was said by an eminent Roman that he wondered, when two augurs met each other in the street, that they did not burst out laughing in one another's faces, so ridiculous was their art. We may almost wonder that two necessitarians do not do the same when they meet one another in practical life; but human credulity knows no bottom.

The necessitarian compelled to think, talk, and act in the world on the assumption that he is a free agent.

But the necessitarian philosophy involves issues of the most profound importance. If it is true, no God exists of whose existence man need take thought, there is no intelligent or moral government of the universe, but all things are directed

Issues of the necessitarian philosophy.

If this
philosophy
be true iron
law prevails
and there is
no future
retribution.

Pessimistic
character
of necessi-
tarianism.

by an iron law of necessity, and by that concurrence of forces modifying one another's action, which in common language is designated chance; and no future existence for man in which the imperfections of the present moral order of things may be remedied hereafter, and the prosperous sinner be called to account for his conduct here. It will doubtless be urged that it is our duty to pursue truth to whatever consequences it may lead, to face them boldly; and not to take refuge in such a delusion as satisfied a thinker of the ancient world who avowed that if man perished at the stroke of death, and the hope of immortality was a delusion, he wished never to be set free from that delusion as long as he lived. But most men will be of opinion that if pessimism is true (and necessitarianism is pessimism), it is useless to talk of the duty of pursuing truth; and that the wisest thing for man is to make the best of his little day, and die; and if delusions can help him to enjoy it, so much the better, for the discovery of necessitarian truth will add to the certainty of suffering and dying, the pain of anticipating it. But we go further, and contend that if necessitarianism thus shakes to their foundation the principles of moral obligation on which society is based (as we are persuaded that it does); if it teaches that this ordered universe is the result of the action of unintelligent forces; that it has no

moral governor, and by consequence no moral order; and that the successful villain, whose astuteness has enabled him throughout life to evade the penalties which society would have inflicted on him, and the suffering and self-sacrificing saint will alike after the stroke of death sleep the sleep of unconsciousness, and be undisturbed by "their works following them;" that consequences such as these form one of the strongest reasons for believing that the theory is untrue. To us, and we think to all men who are not blinded by a theory, it will be simply unbelievable that a universe in which order and adjustments prevail to the degree in which they unquestionably prevail in the physical universe, should be destitute of moral adjustments, a moral order, and a moral force, which is capable of enforcing obedience to moral law, and of punishing transgressors for its violation; for nothing can be more certain than that neither of these can exist, if it will be alike to the evil and the good, after each has passed away from this earthly scene. If this be so, philosophers may preach what they please in defence of virtuous actions; but the overwhelming majority of mankind will draw the conclusion that the best practical rule of life will be to gratify one's own tastes (be they what they may) while it is possible to do so; and not to decline present gratification in the hope of the enjoyment of

The consequences form the strongest reason for believing the theory to be untrue.

It is unbelievable that such a universe as this should be destitute of moral order.

a greater though distant good, when owing to the uncertainty of life's duration, it is more than doubtful whether they shall live to realize it, and with the certainty that when life is ended, both the good and the bad will alike sleep the sleep of unconsciousness. If averages form a ground on which to base moral action, they prove that the number of those who live to realize their calculations, hopes, and expectations is comparatively small.

The necessitarian foundation of moral obligation is utilitarianism.

It knows nothing of a Creator, of moral law, of human brotherhood, or a voice of conscience.

The ultimate foundation on which the necessitarian philosophy rests moral obligation is the principle of utilitarianism, or that course of action which is fitted to realize the greatest happiness of the individual. It knows nothing of a Creator, to whom is due love and service from the creature; nothing of a moral law, founded on His essential nature, and on man's relationship to Him; nothing of a moral governor, who cares for righteousness, and who is prepared to enforce it; nothing of human brotherhood, founded on man's relation to God, as a common Father; nothing of a voice of conscience, which is capable of speaking authoritatively and saying, This it is your duty to do; from this it is your duty to forbear, despite of all consequences which may happen to yourself; nothing of a future state, in which man shall be rewarded or punished for his conduct here. On the contrary, according to its pronouncements, the consequences

of actions, be they good or be they bad, are confined to this present life ; beyond it, the good have nothing to hope, and the bad have nothing to fear. All other foundations of moral obligation it dismisses as no better than old wives' fables.

Utilitarianism, therefore, or the pursuit of our greatest happiness, viewed as a standard of moral obligation, resolves right, *i.e.*, virtuous conduct, into a calculation of consequences. According to this theory, each individual is compelled to pursue that line of conduct which in his opinion will conduce to his greatest happiness, *i.e.*, which will afford him the greatest amount of pleasure. But inasmuch as there is no higher authority to appeal to than the taste of the individual, and the degree of his insight into the future consequences of his actions, opinions may, and do differ widely as to the line of conduct which will realize this result. The utilitarian philosopher affirms that the effort to realize the happiness of others is the one only certain road of realizing the happiness of ourselves. This makes virtuous conduct simply a matter of accurate calculation and good taste ; and vicious conduct the reverse. But the overwhelming majority of mankind think very differently ; and all that this philosophy can do is to hope for their gradual enlightenment. A small number of select individuals may accept the utilitarian standard, and try to live by it ; but there is no reason why

Utilitarianism resolves virtuous conduct into a calculation of consequences.

The utilitarian road to happiness.

Practical
effect of
utilitarian-
ism.

men who are endowed with a less accurate power of calculating the contingencies of the future should not arrive at a different conclusion ; and inasmuch as each individual is responsible to himself alone, and there is no hereafter to be the subject of hope or dread, why a man should not arrive at the conclusion that the most certain way of realizing one's own happiness amid the chances of this uncertain world is to make the best of life's little day by grasping at present gratification, each according to his tastes,—the contemplative man in contemplation ; the elevated man in what he considers great and noble ; the average man in the ordinary pleasures of life ; and the sensualist in sensual indulgence ; or to express the same idea in language borrowed from the Apostle, let us each, according to our respective tastes, “eat and drink ; for to-morrow we die.”

According to
it, it is a
man's
misfortune,
not his sin,
to be bad.

According, therefore, to the principles of this philosophy, for a man to be a bad man is neither his sin, nor his crime, but his misfortune. It is simply, to start with a taste for a particular class of pleasures, and in addition to be a bad calculator of the consequences which will follow from their indulgence. If right conduct is the pursuit of a course of action which a man believes will realize his own greatest happiness, it cannot be denied that the immoral man seeks to realize this, only he mistakes the way of doing it, and is a bad calculator of the means by which it can be realized. His tastes

lead him to desire present gratification without any regard of the source from which it comes; and his powers of calculation are so defective that he is unable to assure himself of the truth of what the utilitarian philosopher affirms, viz., that he will realize his greatest happiness by denying his appetites, instead of gratifying them; or by pursuing what is more elevated, rather than by yielding to his passions. But in good truth, if the only test of virtue is actions which tend to realize our greatest happiness, and if the test of happiness is pleasure, then it is in vain to talk of actions or of pleasures more or less elevated than others, for in that case all can be estimated by one standard only, viz., the amount of pleasure which they yield to the individual. Bad taste, therefore, and a bad power of calculation are the only fault of him whom men have concurred to designate a bad man; or it may be a want of power to pursue what he is convinced in his understanding is a greater, though distant good, at the expense of present gratification, of self-denial, and it may be of present suffering. But all this is his misfortune, and not his sin.

What, I ask, will be the effect of persuading the masses of mankind that the only distinction between actions as good or bad is their tendency to realize the greatest happiness of the individual, and through the individual of the race; and that the foundations on which moral obligation

Bad taste and bad power of calculation the only faults of a bad man, according to it.

Consequences of persuading men to accept the utilitarian standard.

The
testimony of
experience.

The villain
escapes if
astute
enough to
avoid
detection.

have hitherto been supposed to rest, are no better than a quagmire? Past experience proves that to this question there can be only one answer, viz., that each man will consider himself to be entitled to do what he lists, provided he has sufficient astuteness to enable him to avoid the penalties which society would inflict upon him for the breach of its laws, for, according to the principles against which I am contending, the greatest sinner has nothing to fear beyond the grave; and society can only deal with him while he lives. If, therefore, a villain is sufficiently astute to avoid detection (and many villains are thus astute), he need fear no qualms of conscience; all that he has done has been, that he has done as best he could to realize what according to the light which was in him he considered to be his own greatest happiness, and this he has succeeded in accomplishing. The means by which he has effected it are a pure matter of indifference; and when a successful life of crime has come to a termination, this philosophy assures him that his sleep of unconsciousness will be equally undisturbed as that of a Howard or a St. Paul. Truly, if these principles represent the realities of things, the holy, the good, and the self-sacrificing are of all men the most foolish and the most miserable.

But another important consequence follows. Full well it may be asked, if necessitarianism is true, what right has society to inflict penalties

for the violation of its laws? The transgressor of them may justly urge, I have only done what I could not help doing, *i.e.*, I have acted on the most powerful motive, which in my case was the desire of a present gratification, which seemed to me to promise a far greater degree of happiness than by exercising a painful restraint to realize some distant but uncertain good, which owing to the uncertainty of life I may never live to enjoy. I am no philosopher or profound calculator; and whatever such may preach, it seems to me to be wiser to act on the old adage, "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." The only answer which society can return is, Strength is right, and right is strength. I have strength, and by the right of strength I deal with every violator of my laws, and with every one who inflicts on me an inconvenience. I deal with transgressors as I deal with noxious animals. Some, if convenient, I restrain; on others I inflict pain; others, if more convenient to me, I kill. My sole object is to free myself from the inconveniences which you occasion; and to effect this I seek to render it less pleasurable to you to violate my laws than to observe them.

The system deprives society of the right to inflict penalties for breach of laws.

It can only deal with them as noxious animals.

But the utilitarian principle of altruism, or that the realization of the greatest happiness of the greatest number will be attended with the realization of the greatest happiness of self is no new discovery. It is neither more nor less than one of

Altruism no new discovery.

Utilitarian-
ism has
divested
Christian
law of all
moral
power.

the old laws of the kingdom of God, but deprived of all the sanctions by which it can be enforced. Yet we are invited to believe that altruism is a great improvement on the now worn-out Christian law. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, mind, soul, and strength ;" and, consequent on this, "thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself ;" and on the new commandment, to love one another as Christ has loved us. All that the utilitarian philosopher has really effected is, to divest these commandments of all moral power, by proclaiming that there is no God whom we need regard, no Christ to love, and no hereafter to fear.

How is
altruism
to be
generated ?

But if this philosophy is the sole foundation on which morality is to be based, I ask, how is this principle of altruism to be generated ? It cannot be generated by invoking the principle of evolution, for it is one of its fundamental principles that primitive man was altogether selfish, and that everything in civilized man which is not so is an after-growth. How, then, can the disinterested love of others be evolved out of a being whose one distinguishing characteristic is pure love of self ? Many are the shifts to which utilitarianism has recourse, such as the family, and the tribal feeling ; but it may be justly asked, whence came these ? How did they originate in a being whose moral constitution, if he had any, was selfishness pure and simple. The truth must be spoken ; unless it is

The shifts
of utili-
tarianism.

possible to evolve out of a thing that which was never in it; if altruism is to be generated in a being, of whom love of self is the one distinguishing moral characteristic, recourse must be had to a power different from evolution; for if evolution goes on evolving for endless ages, selfishness can never generate sacrifice of self. Such a power Christianity affirms that it possesses; but it is this very power which the utilitarian philosophy ignores. What has it to substitute in its place? This, and nothing more, the aphorism, that the pursuit of the happiness of others for its own sake is the most noble of human pursuits. But what right has the utilitarian to talk of the more or less noble in action, when the only distinction between virtuous and vicious actions is their tendency to realize pleasure or pain. Cordially will Christians assent to the truth of altruism, when it is once admitted that there is a God, who is the moral Governor of the universe, and a future state of retribution; but this is the very thing which utilitarianism refuses to admit into its calculations. Yet if the calculation be limited to the results of actions in this life, not only will it be a matter of extreme difficulty accurately to balance the pleasures with which the effort to realize the happiness of others is attended, against those which follow the indulgence of the passions which terminate in self, but the final result will be extremely doubtful,

Christianity possesses the power which utilitarianism ignores.

Christians will accept the truth of altruism when it is admitted that there is a God and a future state of retribution.

and will in no small degree be dependent on the taste of the individual. But this is not all; for even if the balance should be ultimately pronounced to be in favour of acting on the principle of altruism, so intricate would be the calculation, and so doubtful its results, that it would leave it destitute of a moral power sufficient to outweigh those impulses which urge the overwhelming majority of mankind to prefer present gratification to the chance of greater, but more distant good. One thing is certain; not one in a hundred thousand of mankind has been induced to act on this principle during the ages of the past. It may be a beautiful theory as long as the philosopher confines himself to his study; but as soon as he issues into the hard world of fact, it is felt to be powerless to act on the masses of mankind. Philosophers may assure us that if only men will yield themselves to their guidance it will realize a millennium. This we shall not dispute; for it is the fundamental principle of Christianity that mutual love is the highest happiness of man; but under the utilitarian system the difficulty consists in making this "if" a reality, because it renounces the whole of that mighty moral power which Christianity brings to bear on the human heart, and has nothing to substitute for it but the results of an uncertain calculation, which may vary according to the tastes of the individual.

A beautiful theory for the study, but not for the hard world of fact.

It has no substitute for the moral power of Christianity which it rejects.

The utilitarian system of morality, therefore, reduces virtue and vice to a matter of calculation. Its moral, holy, and good man (if such terms have any right to a place in its vocabulary), is nothing but a good calculator of the consequences of actions, and who has sufficient strength of will to act on his calculations, notwithstanding all the solicitations of his passions to the contrary. Its immoral man, on the contrary, is a bad calculator, or one who, if he calculates rightly, is unable to resist the force of temptation. As a system of morality, therefore, it can recognize neither crime nor sin. What in the ordinary language of mankind is designated moral wickedness, in accordance with its principles, is nothing more than the misfortune of *possessing a bad taste, and imperfect power of calculating the consequences of actions*. If a man can see his way, therefore, to avoid the penalties which society would inflict upon him for the violation of its laws, and if the result of his calculation is that he will realize his own greatest happiness by the practice of villainy and fraud, what, I ask, is to hinder him from so doing? All other moral considerations being swept away under the teachings of this philosophy, does not such a successful villain almost realize the standard of utilitarian virtue? or if not virtue, who can blame him? for he has only done what seemed to him to be best fitted to realize his own greatest good.

The good man of utilitarianism is a good calculator of the consequences of actions.

Moral wickedness, according to it, is only the misfortune of having a bad taste, and imperfect power of calculating the consequences of actions.

The successful villain realizes the standard of utilitarian virtue.

What
necessitarian
philosophy
sweeps
away.

Its moral
edifice is
built on
a foundation
of sand.

It is
compelled to
assume the
truth of
that which
it is its
fundamental
principle to
deny.

The position of things, therefore, stands thus. The necessitarian philosophy sweeps away free agency in man, and the power of self-determination; undermines the foundations on which existing systems of moral obligation are based, and thus destroys every moral power which can be exerted on man for good. Having effected this destruction,—a destruction so great that even some of those who have aided in effecting it have expressed alarm at the immediate consequences with which it may be attended—an attempt has been made to erect a moral edifice on the principles of utilitarianism. But this, as we have proved, is a building erected on the sand, being a system destitute of all moral power to influence the masses of mankind. What, I ask, will they care about the condition of posterity some million years hence, when they have ceased from conscious existence? for even utilitarians admit that their promised millennium will only be realized at some indefinitely remote period of the future, when the personal consciousness of the generation now living, and of numbers yet to come has been swallowed up in the mighty *To πав*. Yet even in doing this the necessitarian philosophy is compelled to commit an act of suicide, viz., to assume the truth of that which it is its fundamental principle to deny. This it does whenever it affirms that it is a duty to pursue a more distant good, rather than a present gratification; for

this act involves choice; choice involves freedom; and freedom, before the course of action chosen can become effect, involves an act of volition and self-determination. Man, therefore, on its own showing is a free agent. True it is that man cannot estimate the precise degree of responsibility which attaches to his brother man,—the question is one far too complicated for our finite understandings; but the Judge of all the earth can, for He not only knows all the conditions of the case, but can penetrate to the secrets of the heart; and we may feel confident that He who has implanted the sense of rectitude and justice in our moral nature, will Himself certainly judge in conformity with that which is right and just. “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?”

Man is,
on its own
showing,
a free agent.

God only
can
estimate
the degree of
individual
responsi-
bility,
and will do
right.

But, as I have observed above, the boasted altruism of modern anti-Christian philosophy is no new discovery, being neither more nor less than the old commandment, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,” divested of the sanctions by which it was enforced. But even the old commandment was “weak through the flesh,” and was incapable of imparting a spiritual power adequate to overcome the evil which exists in man. What, I ask, has altruism done to remedy this defect? The answer must be, All that it has done has been to remove the imperfect supports on which the old commandment rested. As a spiritual power

it is, and ever must be, powerless. But such a power it is the express end and purpose of Christianity to supply. "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?" has been, and ever must be, the cry both of the Legalist and the Altruist in their strivings to realize the commandment. But Christianity returns the answer, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. . . . The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and as an offering for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."¹

¹ Rom. vii. 24, 25; viii. 2-4. (Revised Version.)



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